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Starting, Stimulating and Sustaining English Language Teacher Education and Development

A selection of papers presented at the International Conference in Hyderabad in January 2011

Edited by
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Foreword

The first international conference to English language teacher educators **Starting, Stimulating and Sustaining English Language Teacher Education and Development** was held in Hyderabad in January 2011. This conference brought together over 600 English Language teaching professionals from 17 different countries who were rewarded with a wealth of plenaries, panel discussions, papers, workshops and coffee shop slots (audience generated themed discussions).

The conference formed part of the British Council's English Partnerships programme – a programme which aims to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning across India. The teacher educator is critical to the success of our vision. Without well-trained and motivated teacher educators, teachers will not receive the training, mentoring and support they need to improve their classroom practice. As a result, the conference was designed to provide a high quality professional development opportunity for English Language pre- and in-service teacher educators from across South Asia to meet and share best practices and experiences. It also encouraged networking in order to establish and build a sustainable community and network of English language teacher educators.

These successes would not have been possible without the support of our partners, both behind the scenes and during the conference. We were delighted to work with our co-host and main partner, the English and Foreign Languages University because of their long association with the cause of teacher education and development in India. Similarly, the English Language Teacher's Association of India and the International Association for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language share our vision for quality English language teaching and learning in the classroom and support this through their active networks and communities of teachers in India and globally.

We hope you find these papers useful and we look forward to meeting you again in the second international conference for English Language teachers and teacher educators in Hyderabad in March 2012.

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Introduction

This volume is an anthology of some select presentations made at the first international conference of English language teacher educators on the theme *Starting, Stimulating and Sustaining English Language Teacher Education and Development* held at Hyderabad, India on 22 - 24 January 2011.

The major objectives of this publication are to provide an idea of the range of topics presented at the Conference, create a wider access to the Conference proceedings, and offer a glimpse of the development of ideas that shape current thinking on teacher education. The collection includes papers that have emerged from serious research, presentations founded on experiences in the training classroom, and teacher development workshops based on ideas and techniques that work.

The twenty-one contributions reflect not only a notable geographical spread, but also a significant range of teaching and training contexts. They represent a broad spectrum of issues that are of concern to the teacher educator including Continuing Professional Development (CPD), teaching English in economically and linguistically impoverished contexts, the interface between theory and practice, the interdependence of teaching and research, curriculum and materials development, the influence of proficiency training on professional performance, innovations in the training classrooms, and using technology in the language classroom.

We hope that there will be useful insights, ideas and lessons for a wide range of contexts in the papers included here. We also hope that this publication will help language teachers and teacher educators to reflect on their own practice, break out of professional isolation, explore new avenues of teacher development, acknowledge the challenges of teaching English in multilingual contexts, integrate theory and practice into a meaningful whole, and develop social consciousness through critical pedagogy.

Editors

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Teacher Observations:
From Evaluative to Developmental

Alison Ramage Patterson

Abstract

In many establishments observations are an evaluative assessment tool, which can have demotivating effects on teachers. However, observations also present a unique opportunity for individual professional development, which may not always be available elsewhere in larger teaching establishments. In this research project a number of changes were introduced to the observation process and afterwards teacher responses showed a significant positive shift in their feelings about their observations and the process in general. Thus, the project can report that by making a few simple but significant changes an evaluative observation can become developmental to the benefit both of the teacher and the learning organisation.

Observations – Evaluative and Developmental

Teacher observations form an integral part of any teaching environment but are often viewed with trepidation if not outright fear by teachers. The reason is that even when the declared intention of the institution is that the observation is for developmental purposes, there is often an underlying belief that it will be used for evaluative purposes.

This study is concerned with how the whole process of observations can be transformed from evaluative to developmental. In evaluative observations the teacher is rated on some pre-determined scale for the purposes of continued or terminated employment, where "the observer is there to make a judgement" (Malderez 2003:180). Developmental observations in contrast enable the teacher to benefit professionally from the process and allow them to make "their own decisions about how to use the observer and their observations" (ibid).

The aim of this research is to determine if it is possible to create a positive observational experience for the teachers in an environment which had previously fostered only negative responses and which was continuing to follow an evaluative observational route.

The learning context

The learning environment is the female campus of a Preparatory Year Project (PYP) at a major university the Middle East. The situation is complex as the

University has contracted out this project to a Saudi company working in partnership with a British Educational Trust. The female campus is in its second year of the project.

The PYP has nearly 2,500 students on the female campus between the ages of 17-19, levels ranging from total beginner to upper-intermediate/advanced, (level 7+ at IELTS). At the time of this session of observations there was a teaching staff of about 70, split almost evenly between native speakers and non-native speakers.

Procedure

A literature search was undertaken to seek guidance as to how evaluative observations could be introduced.   Work done by Williams on observations in a learning organization in Singapore (1989:85-91) became a central text, supported by information from Masters (1983) on classroom etiquette and Sheal (1989) on observer training and observation documents.

Based on this reading the observation process was changed significantly from that previously proposed by the University. The most significant changes were:

- Being open and transparent about the procedure.
- Using a small team of highly qualified observers, working together to ensure observations were done to an agreed format and standard.
- Agreeing a strict timetable and a obtaining a commitment by the observers to abide with this.
- Designing a teacher-centred process, giving teachers the opportunity to raise their concerns, opinions, and reflective thoughts before and after the observations.
- Asking the teacher to comment first on their own performance in the post-observation meeting.
- Focusing on the positive aspect of the teachers' performance.
- Providing practical suggestions for development.
- Seeking feedback from the teachers in order to provide an objective response to the process with a view to improvement.

The results from the feedback questionnaire were analysed to identify which aspects of the process had been most influential in changing teachers' attitudes towards observations.

Results Analysis

The two stated aims of this research are to see if it is possible to turn an 'evaluative' observational process into a developmental one and to see if it is possible to create a positive observation experience for teachers.

The most striking result is the significant increase in positive attitudes towards observations following the observation process; up from 25% to 66%, combined with a reduction in negative attitudes from 19% to 4%.

Attitudes towards observations
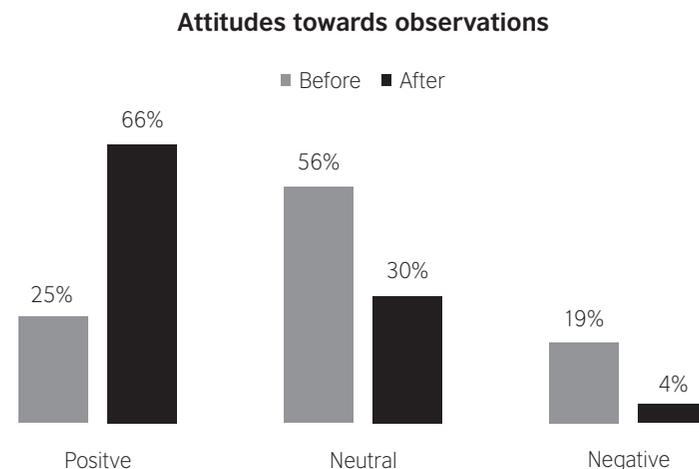
Figure 1 Attitudes towards observations

From the graph above, we can see how the attitudes of the teachers have shifted significantly to a more positive approach with only a very small minority still seeing it as a negative experience. If we consider this on the way to success it is important to identify what aspects of the process contributed to these changes with a view to building on them in the future.

Causes of the positive shift in attitudes

If the results of the survey on the different elements of the observation process are considered, that which received the highest rating and could thus be assumed to be the most significant factor in the teachers' attitude shift. This was the success of the post observation meeting in respect of achieving the stated aim of finding out how the teacher perceived her teaching, and to follow up with her on the areas which she had identified in the pre-meeting. This had a 79% fully achieved rating with only one teacher rating as slightly achieved.

Williams (1989:85) said that developmental observations were ones where the teacher was allowed to make their own judgments on their teaching. This

part of the process did exactly that and the fact that it received such a high rating suggests that teachers not only welcome the chance to make their own judgments in the presence of an observer, but that it improves the general morale of a teacher at the end of the process.

The observation itself had a good response with 88% saying they were either happy or very happy. Naturally most of the responses (55%) were rated happy. The stressful nature of observations under any circumstances is the probable cause of the lower number of 'very happy' responses. The high ratings here are possibly attributable to the pre-observation training, where the observers worked out a code of etiquette following on from Masters (1983).

The rating of the observer's comments in the post feedback meeting had a very good response with 85% of teacher's being happy or very happy. This could be attributed to the pre-observation training given to the observers. This emphasised observing for developmental purposes based on the teacher's comments during the pre-observation meeting.

From these results we can conclude that, as identified by Williams (1989:86), involving the teachers as much as possible in the process and allowing them the opportunity to comment on their own performance significantly improves the attitude of the teacher towards the observation process. Sheal's (1989:97) emphasis on training the observers, which was incorporated into this project, lead to observer behavior which also significantly increased teacher satisfaction with the process.

Analysis of the factors which could have been improved

The pre-observation form, was rated by only 33% of the teachers as useful, while 47% found the pre-observation meeting useful. There could be two causes for the low rating of the pre-observation form: Firstly because of time pressures, many teachers filled this form in on their own, rather than the observer filling it in during the course of the meeting. Secondly, one of the questions on the form was not well understood and caused confusion.

Other factors mentioned in the comments which did not relate to any specific question, but which did, I believe, hinder a positive shift were the practical conditions for the pre- and post- observation meetings. Because of the considerable time pressures both these meetings were necessarily short. For the post-observation meeting in particular this did cause problems as it was not possible to discuss all the teachers' concerns. Secondly, there was no dedicated room for meetings and these had to be done in the resource room which was always being used by teachers or on sofas in the corridors.

Concluding analysis of the results

In any teaching environment with so many teachers of differing qualifications and experience, it is inevitable that there will be some malcontents and people who are resistant to any change or development. The environment of the study is particularly challenging and attracts a broad range of professionals with many differing motives, attitudes and approaches to teaching.

Taking all this into consideration, the results show that there has been considerable success in turning, what could have been a negative experience of an evaluative observation, into a positive one of a developmental observation. This has left teachers more motivated and less apprehensive about future observations.

Summary conclusions and recommendations

This project was undertaken in response to a real need within the organization. The university management wanted evaluative observations, this, together with previous year's experience was, even before the observations had started, creating a negative atmosphere amongst the teachers. The task was to turn this process from evaluative to developmental and to use observations not just as a professional development tool, but also as a way to increase motivation amongst the teachers.

Recommendations

Although the feedback produced encouraging results, there is always room for improvement, and in this particular project, there are several areas where improvements could be made.

The parts of the process which were most welcomed by the teachers were those where the teacher had most input. Thus, in order to improve the process the teacher should be given more opportunities for input in the process.

- Allowing the teacher to chose the date and time of the observation,
- Allowing the teacher to present their lesson plan in the format that they would prefer,
- Allowing greater opportunity for the teacher to discuss their teaching methodologies during the pre-meeting

Other areas for further study could include the pre-observation meeting form which could be redesigned to better focus the teachers' minds on the class and the lesson they are giving.

Practical improvements could be made by ensuring that quiet rooms are

made available to ensure privacy for meetings and more time allocated to allow teachers' more one to one time with the more experienced observers.

Ideally, if the university wants to continue with an evaluative process, the form could be revised to be more achievable and thus less threatening and of more worth to the developmental process.

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Professional Development – Why Bother?

Amol Padwad

Abstract

One important emerging trend in the last decade is viewing teaching as a profession analogous to medicine, law, etc. This paper compares teaching with other professions in terms of professional preparation and development and lists some important differences between them. It argues that continuing professional development is extremely crucial in teaching because the pre-service education and induction training are highly inadequate. It also argues that professional development is essentially a personal journey and that one needs to work out one's personal meaning, agenda and action plan for a meaningful and sustainable professional development. This has important implications for teacher education policies, programmes and plans.

Teacher education, particularly language teacher education, has undergone some significant changes over the past decade. One may list at least four major trends the current teacher education theory and practice. Firstly, there is a shift from the traditional transmission-oriented, product-oriented model of teacher education to a constructivist and process-oriented model. Secondly, there is a greater recognition of teacher cognition and practice being situated in concrete contexts and greater emphasis on closer relationship between theory and practice. Thirdly, the tremendous influence the previous learning experiences have on a teacher is being recognized as a crucial factor. Finally, teaching is increasingly being viewed as a profession like medicine, engineering or law. Teachers are being viewed as professional practitioners like doctors, engineers and lawyers, and their continuous professional development is becoming a major concern. This paper focuses on this last trend – teachers as professionals and their continuing professional development, with specific reference to the state of Maharashtra in India, though the description and discussion may be true of other states of India. The paper begins with a comparative description of professional preparation and development in different professions vis-à-vis teaching in Maharashtra. It will then discuss some key issues and challenges in the professional development of teachers in this context. Finally, it will present some implications for teacher education policies, programmes and plans.

Teaching –vs.– Other Professions

The table below gives a summary of the initial preparation, induction and further development in various professions at the moment.

Profession	Entry qualifications	Induction training	In-service inputs	Support systems
Doctors	- 5 years profession-specific course - strong practical component - 2/3 years specialization	- one year apprenticeship - house job - working with seniors - field work	- short term courses - need-based, up-dating events - mentoring by senior colleagues	- professional association (IMA, IDA, etc) - journals, workshops, conferences - dissemination networks (MRs, etc)
Lawyers	- 5 years profession-specific course - strong practical component	- one year apprenticeship - working with seniors	- need-based, up-dating events - mentoring by senior colleagues	- bar associations - seminars, conferences, workshops - journals and publications - dissemination networks
Engineers/ Architects	- 4/5 years profession-specific course - strong practical component	- one year apprenticeship - working with seniors	- need-based, up-dating events - mentoring by senior colleagues	- professional associations - dissemination networks
Teachers	- general degrees - 1/2 years professional course - very limited practical component	- no induction training	- sporadic INSETT programmes workshops, seminars, conferences - limited relevance to needs	- Professional associations not strong - few journals and publications, limited access - poor dissemination network

Table 1: Preparation and Development in Various Professions

On the basis of the table we can draw comparative trajectories of professional journey in different professions as against the teaching profession. Figure 1 below shows the trajectory for professions like medicine, engineering and law.
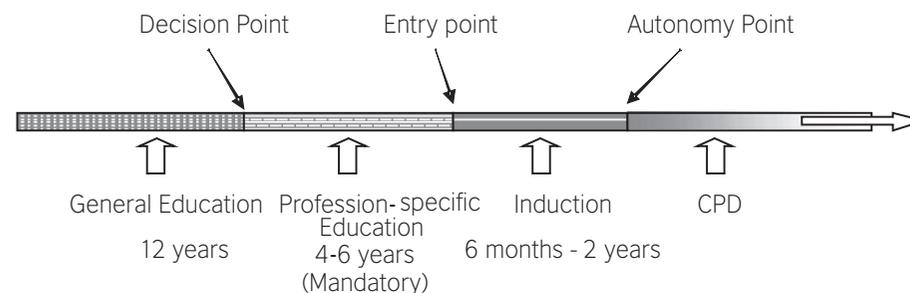
Fig. 1: Professional Route – Engineering, Medicine, Law, etc

There are four stages along the trajectory. After a general school education of 12 years, an individual has to take a decision to join one of these professions ('decision point'), and then enroll at a profession-specific course lasting 4-5 years and containing very strong practice-and-application component. After the professional training the person is gradually eased into the profession through different means of induction, like working with a senior, house job, internship, observation period, shared responsibilities, etc. It is some time after entering the profession and going through the induction that the person takes up independent responsibilities as a professional and starts working autonomously ('autonomy point'). The professional development then continues, supported by numerous systems and means like regular trainings, seminars, workshops, refresher and needs-based courses, professional associations, research publications, dissemination networks, etc. Let us look at the trajectory in the teaching profession.
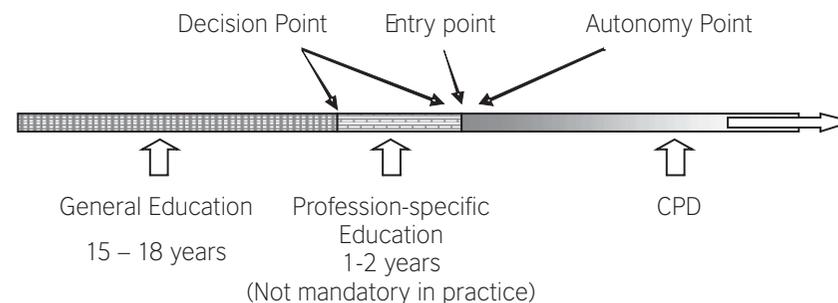
Fig. 2: Professional Route – Teaching

With induction missing, there are three stages in the trajectory, though the second stage of profession-specific education may also be missing for some. In the given context one may become a teacher after completing one's bachelor's, and sometimes master's, degrees. These degree courses are essentially general in nature, not specifically designed to train for the teaching profession. Thus, after much longer general education of 15-18 years, one may decide to become a teacher. One may then join a teacher education course, or may directly become a teacher without going for it. In either case, the decision to join the teaching profession is taken very late, sometimes a few hours before actually joining it! For those who choose to join teacher education courses, these are quite short – one year (secondary teachers) or two years (primary teachers) (and none for tertiary teachers!) – and are usually largely theoretical with limited practical and application component. With such limited preparation – or without any – one joins the teaching profession. There are no induction schemes or support for a new entrant. From the day one the person comes to be independent and autonomous. In short, the point of joining the profession is also the autonomy point. Thus, in principle – and in reality too – one decides to be a teacher, becomes one and begins to work autonomously all on the same day. For such people, the decision point, the entry point and the autonomy point are all together! The situation does not improve even after entering the profession. The teaching profession – especially primary and secondary – does not offer many opportunities for continuing one's professional development. Apart from a few sporadic mandated 'training programmes', usually chaotic, largely irrelevant and narrowly focused, there are hardly any avenues like academic events, teacher networks, professional associations, research publications and dissemination, capacity building courses, etc.

There are, thus, some important differences between the developmental routes in teaching and in other professions. Firstly, in case of other professions the decision to join is taken well in advance, while in teaching it is taken quite late, sometimes a few hours before joining. Secondly, much longer time is spent on preparing as a professional in other professions as compared with teaching. The amount of time and efforts spent in pre-service training as a professional is woefully inadequate in teaching. Thirdly, the support systems and developmental opportunities available in other professions are much greater and more effective than those in teaching. Fourthly, there is much stronger intrinsic motivation for growth in other professions, since professional performance is directly related to survival and success. Consequently, there is a greater voluntary effort for personal and professional development, while in teaching one does not find much intrinsic motivation nor much voluntarism.

Why and what of CPD

The foregoing comparison makes it clear why one's professional development after entering the profession is so important in teaching. If what happens in teaching before entering (pre-service education) and while entering (induction) is woefully inadequate, the only hope is from what happens after entering the profession (continuing professional development).

This leads to a fundamental question about the notion of 'professional development' – what it might mean and entail. Personal communications, interviews and surveys by this author with a large number of teachers suggest that teachers view professional development as a movement from a 'mere teacher' to a researcher, trainer, speaker, academic writer and teacher educator. Similar views are expressed in the research literature too. Richards (1990) sees professional development leading a teacher to be a programme and materials developer, needs analyst, decision-maker, problem-solver and a researcher in the classroom – all rolled into one. For Crandall (1996) professional development leads teachers to a variety of professional activities like writing for publication, developing funding, presentation and project proposals, or working on public speaking and professional presentations. On a more abstract and general note Evans (2008: 30) defines professional development as "the process whereby people's professionality and/or professionalism may be considered to be enhanced."

Why should I bother?

In spite of these generalisations, no consensual definition or a universal formula for professional development can be found. The practicing teachers' responses mentioned above clearly suggest that every individual will have a personal meaning of professional development, since individuals have different backgrounds, interests and capabilities, vie for different kinds of goals and have different levels of motivation and support. One common understanding and action plan of professional development is not only not desirable, but also not possible. This means that each one will have to find their personal meanings of professional development, set up their personal agendas and draw personal action plans. These meaning, agenda and plan are essentially individual and personal, though they may match/ overlap with those of others. Moreover, they will keep evolving over time.

There is another aspect of this personal nature of the whole enterprise of development. Since we are talking of development and not merely training/ education, we need to remember, as Wallace (1991:3) summarises, that "training or education is something that can be presented or managed by others; whereas development is something that can be done only by and for oneself." People cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves. In

other words, development is primarily one's own responsibility. To continue the metaphor used in the beginning, professional development is a personal journey; you may read travel guides, watch fellow-travellers and consult tour operators, but you will have to undertake the travel yourself to reach anywhere. But it is also true that this personal journey becomes easier if we have travel guides, fellow-travellers, tour operators and road maps, i.e. various kinds of support.

Implications

Three important conclusions can be drawn from this discussion. First, in the context in question, continuing professional development after entering the profession is extremely crucial for teaching, especially since the pre-service teacher preparation and induction are poor and inadequate. Second, professional development is a personal journey, and one must try to evolve one's personal meaning, agenda and action plan, if this journey is to be meaningful and sustainable. Third, although professional development is a personal enterprise, it needs various kinds of support to evolve and thrive.

This implies that teacher education policies, programmes and plans need to handle at least two challenges. Recognising that professional development cannot be defined, mandated and supplied externally and uniformly for all, they need to find ways of building in help, flexibility and freedom for individual teachers to personalise their professional development. Recognising that professional development is a long-term, challenging and painful process, they need to provide for various kinds of support, including resources, recognition and incentives.

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Cascade Training:
Lessons Learned from the Syria Experience
Barbara Law

Abstract
Cascade training has been one of the methods of choice in delivering training to teachers in rural areas and other contexts where access to trained professionals is limited. Cascade Training is not without its problems, which need to be addressed. The author participated in a cascade training programme in Syria during the years 2006/7 and thus has cautionary advice and proposals as to what is needed to make Cascade Training successful. This article discusses the attempt at cascading in Syria and analyzes the challenges encountered, what was done right, what was not considered in setting it up, and what was learned, thus providing insights into what should and should not be done in other programmes.

Cascade training: lessons learned from the Syria experience
There is a marvelous little scene in the 1984 movie "Johnny Dangerously," starring Michael Keaton, in which Vermin the villain announces that he's going to kill Johnny's brother. Johnny's girlfriend sends a parrot to deliver the warning, "Vermin's going to kill Johnny's brother at the Savoy theatre tonight." The parrot flies to the prison where Johnny is incarcerated, lands on the shoulder of a prisoner sitting at lunch and delivers the message. This prisoner in turn passes the message on to his neighbour, who passes it on to the next. The message goes from man to man until it gets to Johnny: "Johnny and the Mothers are playing Stomping at the Savoy in Vermont tonight." Johnny jumps to his feet. "Vermin's going to kill my brother at the Savoy theatre tonight," he says. "I didn't say that," says his neighbour. Johnny replies, "No, but I know this grapevine."
Cascade training, without the proper planning, allocation of resources and attention to quality, is like playing Grapevine. If there is no "Johnny" at the end of the line, the message, as it's passed down the line, gets increasingly garbled until, when it reaches the proposed recipient, it has changed so much it's nearly unrecognizable.

**What is Cascade Training?**
Cascading, in theory, is a great idea. "Cascading is meant to symbolize the free, unencumbered flow of ideas, skills and knowledge from one level of, in this case education, to another...If you train a trainer to train other trainers who then train others, the exponential multiplication of learning, aids developmental processes and cuts training time which preserves training

resources and maximises skill distribution. (Mackenzie, 2010). The concept is attractive because it seems to be a cheaper and more convenient method of delivering training to rural areas where trainers are few and far between than direct training of teachers.

However, wrongly implemented, cascading can result in change for change's sake, or simply change for the worse.

This happens for several important reasons:

- Knowledge is "situation- and context-specific" (Rafi, 2009). What is workable and feasible for one context, may not, for any number of factors, be workable in another. There is no such thing as a one-size fits-all training curriculum.

- Cascading always involves a progressive loss of knowledge and understanding. A more or less significant portion of knowledge and skills fails to transfer to the trainees. "The trainers will not be in a position to transfer the portion of knowledge and skills to the trainees which have not been transferred to them in the training where they were trainees" (Rafi, 2009).The amount of material that is actually transferred may in fact be as low as 15 – 20%. One Syrian supervisor, for instance, squashed everything he had learned in the two weeks of trainings into one hour of training for the teachers. It was obvious he was only parroting what he had received, and altogether dismaying to think of how much the teachers actually learned.

Trainer knowledge base

Trainer 2nd base
knowledge base

Classroom teacher
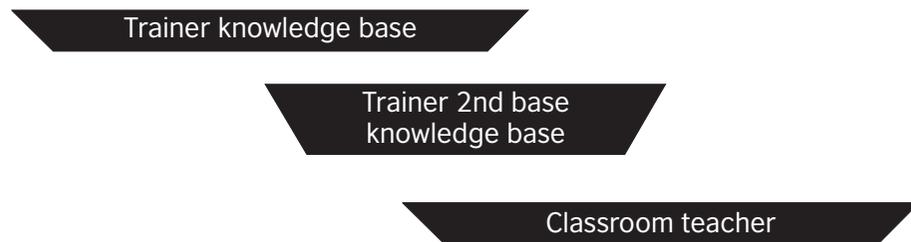
- Teachers have to return to
schools. They are immersed in their own
realities that are either supportive of their efforts or hostile and reactionary. "Regardless of what teachers or teacher candidates learn in professional development activities, the realities of school life have a lasting formative influence on what they do with students. Many project

participants learn state-of-the-art techniques and return to schools with administrators who know nothing about such matters. Teachers often report that their principal's first reaction to cooperative learning was a complaint about the noise and activity levels. Their successful efforts to get students to communicate in a target language might be criticized if the grammar is not perfect" (Model Strategies, 1995).

- Without continual institutional support, change--which takes place very slowly-- just plain does not happen.

A case in point is the author's experience in Syria. During the 2006/2007 school year, the author participated in cascade training in Syria as a joint project between the Syrian Ministry of Education and the U.S. Department of State. The lessons learned from this training can serve as a cautionary lesson to other institutions planning or considering cascading.

Syria, in 2006, had 25,000 English teachers, 75 teacher supervisors distributed among the mouhafazas (districts) and 3 Senior Supervisors located at the central ministry office in Damascus who were responsible for implementing all policy and curriculum for the country.

In the autumn of 2006, Ministry of Education decided that the education system needed to be overhauled, and that the supervisors needed to be trained so that they could in turn train the teachers in the newest communicative methods of English language teaching. Supervisors were brought in to Damascus in three different cohorts, to be trained by two senior English Language Fellows and one from the British Council. The supervisors were to go back to their mouhafazas (governorates) to develop their own trainings to be delivered to teachers based on the materials we gave them. Following two weeks of trainings, the Fellows travelled throughout the country observing the trainers conducting trainings for local teachers.

The end results were:
Some supervisors understood the concepts, were truly gifted at training and KNEW it. Some presentations were senseless and unacceptable. Several supervisors had never taught at all, but had gained their position as supervisor through political connections. They were absolutely unfit for the job. The situation stalled when we left Syria at the end of the year.

Discussion
In critiquing the project, it was useful and instructive to consider both what we did right and what we did not understand or account for in setting up the programme.

What we did right:

- The group who were trained to give trainings were those people who were responsible for the teachers, not just teachers themselves, therefore they avoided the "Who are you to tell me?" sort of problem. These supervisors were from the districts they taught in, thus they knew the contexts within which their teachers needed to operate. The supervisors were an unusually close-knit bunch who were used to working together, thus many of the attendant problems of collaboration were nullified.

- Most of them had good relationships with the teachers under their responsibility.

- We learned from our mistakes. The Ministry was willing to adapt. Rather than making them all conduct cascade training, The Ministry changed course and decided to give the job to those who really excelled at it. They recognized that not everyone could do the job and were willing to change their ideas. Those who really excelled were chosen to lead the trainings. These teachers KNEW they were good.

What we failed to recognize or were not able to address:

- There was no Buy-In . The Ministry dictated, their edicts were carried out. We had never encountered a more disgruntled and unwilling group of participants during our first meeting. They were resentful of the mandate, far from home, and not convinced that it was worth the effort. It took a great deal of time and negotiation to turn their attitudes around.

- The goals were not specific. The minister simply wanted to change the way English was taught. This was the scatter-shot method of training.

- There was no feedback while the supervisors were developing the trainings. The supervisors left Damascus and returned to their mouhafazas and there was no communication or follow-up with the Fellows, or exchange of ideas until we were sent out to evaluate them.

- There was little attention to WHY it was necessary to move in this direction

- There was little understanding of the theory behind what we were trying to do

- Quality of trainers was compromised. The British Council "trainer" was not a teacher, but simply a community organizer who was adept at whipping up enthusiasm for activities, but did not know the least bit of

theory of second language learning, reading and writing theory or practice, or adapting materials to the needs and levels of the students. Therefore, his workshops were long on activities, with no attention to the hows and the whys, so transfer was nearly non-existent.

- ALL supervisors were required to train and give trainings without regard to their suitability.

- Due to the strained relationship between Syria and the U.S. and some bad blood we had no control over, never once during that year were we allowed in the classrooms. We were training "blind" with no context.

The programme was discontinued the moment we left. Until my colleague returned in Sept., 2010, nothing had been done. She had to start over again.

Lessons Learned:

MacKenzie (2010) is correct when he states that cascade training "needs to be carefully planned and carried out, monitored and evaluated before it can be said to succeed. Success is the recursive training of trainers to train teachers or other teacher-trainers with as little loss of information and as much skill-building as possible." The three most important lessons we gained from the Syria experience were:

1. In order for cascading to be effective, selection of trainers is key. They must possess knowledge and skill in teaching, and, just as importantly, they can translate theory into practice and explain both.

2. Goals must be specific and manageable (MacKenzie, 2010). Grand and sweeping goals look good on paper, but they rarely take hold. When one goal is attained, then a careful analysis of what worked and why, based on valid evidence, can lead to a plan for setting and achieving the next goal. Being able to attain one goal provides the motivation to achieve another, rather than the dismay, abandonment and resignation that comes from being expected to change everything overnight.

3. Sustained support. Resources have to be available, in terms of materials and coaching. The materials have to be easily accessible, because all teachers are individuals who need to be able to choose the materials that best suit their teaching styles and the specific needs of their students. The coaches also need to be able to work on-site to help teachers customize the materials and the strategies.

The importance of trained teachers for any country or programme cannot be overstated. The methods of supplying this training cannot be left to chance. Resources that are spread too thin, or are not supported, trainers who are not properly trained lead to a waste of valuable time and money, as well as

morale in teachers who are expected to make those changes.

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A Teacher Orientation Programme
Florinda M. J. Azavedo

Abstract

This presentation is an outline of a programme for teacher educators (English) that Goa Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (GSSA) is in the process of developing. The GSSA is the Goa unit of the Central Government regulated programme for the up gradation of teacher training and the preparation of teaching/learning material for standards 1 to 7. This paper presents an overview of what we were doing in 2009 -2010 to help GSSA appointed resource persons in rural contexts become facilitators for school teachers and also generate their own learning materials.

The Goa Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (GSSA) is the Goa unit of the Central Government regulated programme for the up gradation of teacher training and the preparation of teaching/learning material for standards 1 to 7. As an important part of its mandate, it undertook various activities to train teachers as facilitators and materials developers. This paper explores a programme undertaken by GSSA for the teachers from Goa. Two main aspects will be addressed in this paper:

1. The societal context within which English is learnt in Goa.

2. How was the program conceptualized? What aspects are being emphasized as especially important in rural contexts? What are the main challenges we face in this continuing program?

First the context will be briefly described, since it shapes the aspirations of the children and their parents. The so called rural areas of Goa are visibly different from those in the rest of India, many of them being like prosperous small towns. This will be followed by a discussion of the workshops, the lessons learnt from them and the challenges faced during the implementation of the programme.

Context characteristics

- Regardless of whether a school is located in the village or the neighbouring town, many children, even of affluent parents, do not have appropriate academic help at home either because parents do not have the time or because the parents themselves, though affluent, have insufficient schooling.

- Consequently, there is a great reliance on tuitions sometimes from teachers (this is illegal) but also from young college dropouts who see

teaching as supervised memorization and an easy way to add to the family income. So, learning English becomes learning text answers to text questions. The learner continues to fare poorly in the content subjects that require English language skills.

- There is increasing in-migration especially of unskilled worker families into the rural as well as urban areas so there are a significant number of children in schools with home languages other than Konkani.

- Teachers who have migrated to Goa also have various home languages.

- English is heavily used in social life and commerce. Employers require English communication skills for most jobs.

- Even before 1961, when Goa was liberated from colonial rule, English was a valued language in the state because of out migration for jobs to other parts of India and the world. Several English medium schools sent students to the then Poona Board exams. Respected English medium schools in the main towns see a rush for admissions because these schools are perceived as making children more competent in English than the rural schools. Social pressure from the job market and other segments of society has intensified the demand for English.

- Teaching, as a profession is no longer a preferred career option of people from English speaking families, even though pay scales have been increased. Young persons joining this profession today are not proficient in English and are frequently first generation graduates in their families. Teaching is often seen as an easy step up from the traditional unskilled family occupation. Very few men enter the profession. This is a worry for many schools.

- The mother tongue (Konkani) is the medium of instruction in state funded primary schools, whether rural or urban, with a major switch to the English medium in Std 5 for most schools.

- Rural school children lack confidence to speak English because teachers use too much translation whether into Konkani or another home language and transmission methodology instead of interactive methods. School information related talk is critical to academic success but rural children cannot use English to anticipate, predict outcomes, analyze or develop imaginative situations, so they fare poorly in all subjects.

The GSSA programme

The Goa Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan initiated a programme for Block and Cluster resource people, many of them practicing teachers, who are tasked with conducting programmes for facilitating change in schools after completing the GSSA program. Many of these teachers are themselves not sufficiently proficient in English

Four workshops (each of three days duration) were held starting late 2009. The sessions were intended to help the participants become aware of the urgent need to make classrooms more interactive and to collaboratively prepare sample learning materials that could be used in workshops with school teachers.

About the workshops

a) The first workshop was a space for listening to teachers, to their difficulties, successes and suggestions for change. What did they feel they needed? The teachers shared the difficulties/challenges of their task and the observed needs of their learners. In all the workshops they have been very appreciative that they were listened to and given the active role of change makers.

b) Inputs from the State Resource Group consisted of two parts – awareness sessions and practical suggestions for using concepts of Drama, Multiple Intelligences, Environmental Awareness and Team Work in teaching English in Std.5, and teaching the language skills. The objective was to get our team to prepare an English language learning programme, including assessment, for Std 5 and then move to work on Stds.6 and 7.

c) A fourth workshop was organized to make participants aware of the immense possibilities of information technology in ELT.

d) A workshop is being organized early in 2011 to design an assessment scheme for Std 5. A draft was prepared by participants in the third workshop. One of the assumptions of the program is that, if change can be made in the assessment of learning, then it could stimulate teachers to modify classroom teaching practices.

e) There was a general observation by teachers and parents that the switch from the mother tongue medium to the English medium in Std 5 was not being adequately managed and was causing difficulties in the learning of the other subjects. The key areas of need as identified by teachers were Reading, Spoken English/ Communication skills, Vocabulary and Grammar. Incidentally, these also seem to be the areas in which teachers themselves need help.

The first phase of the program focuses on Std 5 since that is the transition point for almost all children in Goa. We focused on three themes when conceptualizing the program – COOPERATION (team work), the immense value of community for learning, COMMUNICATION and CREATIVITY. We

believe that the teacher trainers would be better motivated if they are consulted and involved at every stage of program design and implementation. So the program they will eventually conduct for school teachers is being designed by the program participants themselves.

The initiative is a move away from a top down prescriptive approach in which syllabus and materials are given to teachers. To avoid making major systemic changes that may cause resentment among parents, the prescribed text is being used as a resource for some communicative activities. The teachers are encouraged to use a variety of other sources including comic strips and learner produced materials.

Sample lesson plans are being prepared to demonstrate how the text can be used for communicative activities in ways that increase learner participation e.g. drama activities, theme based projects. Cross curricular content is used and miming games are encouraged. Children will bring their favorite stories and songs to class. They will retell the stories in English, prepare story boards, and draw/ make changes to the text stories. They will move away from the text theme and make stories of their own with objects. We encourage drawing, painting and talking about things children experience in their neighborhoods – local festivals, heritage sites, daily life situations at home and so on.

All the workshops have stressed the three Cs mentioned above. Time was spent almost entirely in group work with a few plenary sessions to share ideas and work done. The participants listed some language functions they considered necessary. They suggested activities that could be conducted to encourage learner talk and they accepted that success in language learning was facilitated by attention to the group process.

We are encouraged by the consistently high interest level demonstrated by the participants. Some of them have conducted trial workshops in schools and have reported positive responses from teachers. But the main task is to encourage/ help teachers to make their classrooms meaningfully and systematically interactive.

All schools have computer laboratories; there is a government cyber-age scheme in place, so several rural homes do have computers. The One Laptop per Child scheme is slowly spreading across Goa beginning with primary schools; teachers have been given interest free loans to buy computers and we look forward to increasing the use of technology in rural classrooms.

What have we learnt?

1. The teacher educators (participants) are eager to strengthen their skills to better help the school teachers.

2. They appreciate the opportunity to become change makers.

3. They can articulate the needs of the school learners and agree that an interactive activity focused approach to teaching English is necessary. They did not need any convincing.

4. The participants all had ideas regarding the changes necessary and worked to produce learning materials.

What are the challenges?

1. Need for an assessment system that focuses on skills and performance, not on memorization of prescribed text material. As long as the assessment still stresses memory, classroom teaching will remain a transmission exercise. Though the Goa Board has shifted to the grading system and continuous, comprehensive assessment, the nature of the test tasks and manner of scoring remains traditional and memory focused.

2. Explaining changes to the Parent-Teacher Associations in rural schools. Parents are uncritical of the school system. They themselves are products of the competitive marks/ percentage system.

3. Teacher centric teaching is still common and the notion of the teacher as a co-learner is not a readily accepted, though more teachers are now willing to experiment with different roles for themselves than, say, 5 years ago.

4. A school climate of excessive scores based competition.

Where are we at present?

The participants have prepared drafts of the kind of lesson plans that comprise a year's plan of work for Std 5 with a focus on interaction, the vocabulary list that children need in Std 5 to understand other school subjects. We have kept in view that children already use many English words before coming to school but may not know they are English words. Some assessment tasks have also been prepared. The Goa government has expressed its commitment to improve the teaching of English. The movement towards change will continue in the new academic year.

Exploiting L1 Knowledge in English Teaching: Teacher Education Possibilities

Geetha Durairajan, Satish Nainala and Diganta Ghosh

Abstract

In spite of better recognition of multilingualism languages in Indian classrooms exist as watertight compartments. The official curriculum hardly provides space for languages to interact. The home language is used in the English classroom merely for transactional or explanatory purposes. Student L1 capabilities are rarely perceived as transferable although the 'Common Underlying Proficiency' notion is accepted. Teachers forget that the L1 is also the tool for knowledge processing and world mediation. Teachers can exploit meta-knowledge of language and knowledge of the world available in L1 to enable L2 learning. A theoretical justification for this approach, some research evidence, classroom techniques and teacher education possibilities will be discussed.

Languages in Plurilingual Contexts

India is a country which is both societally and individually multilingual at the grassroots level; multilinguality for us is a positive force and is the norm rather than the exception. This can be contrasted with a predominantly monolingual Japan at one end, and Canada and England at the other. Canada is officially bilingual but many individuals are monolinguals; England is officially monolingual but hosts many individual bi/multilingual speakers. India therefore has to foster strong multilingualism. It is therefore not enough for one language to merely recognize or tolerate another language; languages need to respect, nurture when needed, and whenever possible, share mutual space with other languages. Such sharing, however, is not yet a reality in Indian language classrooms.

Languages in Educational Space

From an educational framework, the three language formula is one attempt to recognize and value multilingualism. It was implemented in 1968, but has never been very successful and is still problem ridden. For example, Sanskrit often took the place of the 'other' Indian language in Hindi speaking states; marks could be scored, but another language for communication really did not get learnt.

The role of English in Indian educational language space is changing. English is the language of social and economic mobility; it is beginning to be taught in regional medium schools, in many states, from class 1. Some states are even contemplating switching to English medium schools. English is definitely a language that we, as Indians, need to value and use, and there is curricular recognition of this; still the image of English speaker in India is problematic and needs to be examined.

English speakers in language Classrooms in India: Images and Perceptions

In line with the more than 30 year old Selinkerian articulation of 'interlanguage', it is assumed that the L2 learner of English in India is 'deficient' and must approximate to native speaker norms. It is assumed that the language proficiency of the English speaker in India will get fossilized as an 'interlanguage system' and will never become a 'full's system by itself. The two 'systems' are therefore never allowed to 'meet' for fear of 'contamination'. One result of this separation of languages is that language classrooms have domestic water tight walls between them. Children are asked to think and write in the language that is being taught; this, it is assumed is to prevent inter-lingual interference. The use of the first language in the English classroom in India, is therefore like the use of a white lie; it cannot be advocated, but cannot be avoided either.

The first language is definitely used by teachers and students, but for a host of other, non-enabling purposes. It is used by the teacher in a traditional classroom to manage the classroom (e.g. to give instructions and maintain discipline) because it is assumed that English may not be understood by the student. Sometimes, it is used as a teaching device, to explain word meanings, or often, to just translate the text. The first language is used by the student to reply, or answer in class, to talk to each other or to state that they do not know the answer (Pathak 2005). These 'varied' uses, it is argued, are still an apologetic or unfruitful use of the L1. It is not constructive and does not enable better language learning to happen.

The result is a 'monolingual and monolithic classroom' (Mohanty 2006) that does not recognize either multilinguality (attitudes, anxieties, social ties, abilities and resources) or multilingualism (the process and result of language acquisition). The English speaker in India (and in many other parts of the world) needs to be perceived as a second language user and not necessarily a 'deficient' learner. Hence this person has to be seen as someone who has her own knowledge of the two languages. This person is not a monolingual with an added L2, with separate knowledge of L1 and L2. If this view is accepted, then, it has repercussions for the teaching and learning of any L2, in this case English.

Nature of L2 Proposed Teaching/Learning

Teaching an L2 is not just about teaching the student how to add a few rooms to a house by building an extension at the back; it is like the rebuilding of internal walls. It implies that in some ways the construction of the house itself will change. Trying to put languages in separate compartments in the mind is doomed to failure since the compartments are connected in many ways. (Cook 2001). L2 teaching needs to perceive bilingualism as an advantageous phenomenon and not as a 'problem'. Today in the 21st century the advantages are well documented. These include verbal originality, verbal divergence, ability to perceive semantic relations and divergent thinking. (Jessner 2006).

Using this perspective as the base, the L1 or first language can be used as a positive resource. It is construed as a fresh approach to language teaching, but applicable only in multilingual second language teaching contexts. This approach will provide the space to appreciate the child's linguistic resources and can be used to enable 'capabilities' and value the functionings these language users can achieve within and across languages. What is being advocated here, however, is NOT the translation of texts or the providing of explanations by the teacher. This is an approach where the teacher deliberately uses the L1, to tap knowledge of the world, or knowledge of L1 and about the L1 to enable language capability in L2. The first language then becomes a valuable resource; the student is taught not to apologize for it, or be ashamed of it (the 'should not use my mother tongue in the second language classroom' syndrome). If this approach is adopted, the realizations could be many. However, it is still in a very nascent stage, particularly in the Indian context. Examples of ongoing research evidence range, however, from year 2 to year 9 of English, to the teaching of literature (all located in rural parts of India).

Practical realizations

The first study reported here focused on the use of L1 to tap world knowledge and knowledge of L1 of children who were studying in class 4 Assamese medium, but in their second year of English. This study based on 10 classes taken by the researcher, where different aspects of language, (vocabulary, grammar and reading) were focused on, found that particularly in the areas of word knowledge and awareness of print and reading capability, tapping and exploiting L1 (a dialect of Assamese, known as Bajaali) made a difference; children were able to respond and speak at least a few sentences in English, although they initially knew only the numbers and the letters of the alphabet in English (Pathak 2005).

The second focuses on the teaching of writing to class 9 Telugu medium students. Research evidence had proved that composing in L2 is a bilingual activity and that a writer who has more than one language at her/his disposal can use either L1 or L2 while performing cognitive operations during composing in L2. This is a fairly common strategy and can fulfill many purposes including generation of ideas, planning and organization of texts, and evaluation of the text produced. Many of these studies have used think aloud protocols and have provided a wealth of knowledge about the use of L1 in the L2 classroom. However, this wealth is restricted to the incidental use of L1 by the students while composing in L2; such use is also student self initiated. There are hardly any studies that have investigated using deliberate and teacher initiated use of L1.

The research study therefore has taken one further step beyond existing work, in that, from student self-initiated use of L1, it shifts its focus to deliberate teacher initiated use of the first language. The attempt made was to provide cognitive support to generate ideas, plan and (re)write narrative opinionated essays in the L2 (English). A pre test was administered to establish levels of L2 writing capability. The intervention tasks were followed by a post test. 16 class 9 students participated in the study. There was an increase of 1.625 in the post test scores when compared to pre-test ones. Pre test scripts had only phrases and clauses and a few disjointed sentences, but the post test scripts had introductory, reasoning and concluding statements. The post test scripts also had more noun and verb phrases.

The third study focuses on a totally different area, transfer of literary capability. Its aim is to exploit students' capability of understanding literature, existing or acquired, in L1, and transfer it to their understanding of literature in L2. The literary capability of 6 students in year one of an English literature programme, in a rural part of West Bengal, is the narrow area studied. The study focuses on one aspect of literary capability, namely the concept of irony in plot, character portrayal, and narrative tone. The texts and tasks were graded from easy to difficult, and moved from Bangla, through a Bangla text translated into English, to an Indian English text to culminate in an English canonical text. The study found that students were able to locate and comment on the easier examples of irony, (in the English canonical text) but were unable to do so when the sentences or concepts became complex. They needed scaffolding to accomplish this task; with help they were able to come up with independent interpretations. This 'scaffolded' interpretation was reported as a 'big gain' in the study. These students, at the beginning of the experiment, had needed help with identifying irony, even with the Bangla text. They had not ever read primary texts before, and were accustomed to only memorizing and reproducing answers from 'guide books'.

The three studies indicate that if the student's capability in the more enabled language is used as a vehicle for thinking, planning, organizing, analyzing, revising etc. language/literary capability can be enabled more effectively. As

stated earlier in the paper, this is a relatively 'new' area of research, but with the little evidence available, it seems that there will be teacher education repercussions.

Implications for teacher education

If the students' knowledge of the first language/mother tongue has to be used as a scaffold to enable language capability in the second language (here English) the, it is important to raise the teacher's own self awareness of multilinguality and language capability. The teacher needs to go 'meta' on his/her own language use. For this, at the teacher training level, translation could be used as a teaching technique. It may also be necessary to teach these concepts in content classes in teacher development programmes. Last, but not the least, it may be advantageous to not have English only or Hindi only education programmes; these could become language education programmes. If this happens, then the enabling across languages would become seamless for the teachers of these languages would work with each other to enable a student's languages capability.

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Rethinking Continuing Professional Development for English Language Teachers

Krishna Kalyan Dixit

Abstract

Continuous Professional Development is an emergent field in teacher education. Following the global trend, India too has acknowledged its importance in making educational change a reality. This paper advocates the need to rethink the role of CPD in the Indian context. It argues that CPD activities as practiced in other contexts may demotivate the teacher with regard to CPD. The paper mainly deals with CPD in India, emergent notions of the new teacher, and how CPD designed for the new teacher may not fit in with the existing context.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has become one of the buzz expressions in education in general and English Language Teaching (ELT) in particular around the globe. Following this global trend, CPD entered Indian educational discourse in the last decade aiming at the provision of quality education for every student. The inclusion of a separate chapter on CPD in National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE: 2009) by National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) bears a testimony to it. The crucial role played by teachers in making educational change a reality is now well established. The acceptance of the vitality of teachers in enacting the rapidly changing curriculum has contributed to the shift in focus from materials and methods towards teachers.

However, CPD is understood and enacted in several forms with differing objectives. It means different things to different stake holders in education. For example, for policy makers it needs to have a well outlined structure (for the purposes of mass scale implementation and for fixing accountability). In emergent literature, CPD is generally interpreted from two perspectives: CPD as a top down process and CPD as an exclusive domain of teachers (Day and Sachs: 2004).

In India CPD is gradually attracting the attention of educational policy. If we look at the policy documents (for example NCFTE op. cit.) it appears that it largely derives from philosophy and practices of CPD in contexts different from India. In other words, it is based on Western contexts in general and to some extent on Eastern contexts like Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Therefore, it is not understood and taken up as an important issue by teachers as their concerns differ. For example, drawing on the personal experience, for the majority of teachers working in rural and semi-urban area improving their own language proficiency is the primary concern which is

rarely a part of policy initiated CPD programmes.

However, to cause the needed change in English language education CPD remains the only alternative as pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes are inadequate. It would not be altogether inappropriate to suggest that there is no ELT specific teacher education in India. Most of the pre-service teacher preparation is based on overall educational philosophy and psychology. A little component, in terms of teaching methodology, is allotted to ELT. In this sense, teachers graduating through such courses are not well prepared to handle English language teaching in contexts where English is taken to be the most reliable medium for upward mobility. So, there is a need to rethink CPD for the Indian ELT context. This paper has 4 sections. In the first section I will briefly describe CPD in the Indian context. In the second part there is a discussion on the emergence of new teacher in the wake of changed socio-economic scenario. The third section problematizes CPD as advocated in policy with reference to Indian context. I will conclude the article with implications for making CPD teacher-friendly.

CPD in India

India presents a very peculiar case of CPD for English language teachers. There are three agencies addressing the CPD needs of teachers with differing objectives. Let me begin with the government agency. NCTE is the apex authority in teacher education. The policies and curriculum for teacher education designed by NCTE are recommendatory in nature for the state governments. NCTE usually provides a framework for the teacher education curriculum, teaching/training days, and methods of training and so on. As said at the beginning NCTE has already introduced CPD as a part of in-service education. But at the macro-level CPD opportunities for teachers are largely dependent on State Education Ministry norms which are often contradictory to the objectives of NCTE. At the micro-level the CPD opportunities which are actually available to teachers are determined by several agencies like local education officers and school/college authorities. The aims of CPD as enlisted in NCFTE (op. cit.) are as follows:

Aims of CPD
- Reflect & research practice
- Prepare for other roles (teacher education, counseling and curriculum development)
- Update on own academic discipline
- Update on social and educational issues
- Collaborate with teachers and other academicians
- Transform existing practice towards creation of more child friendly learning environments
- Break out of intellectual isolation

Figure 1 Aims of CPD (NCFTE ibid: 64-65)

However, in-service training model is often used as a channel for implementing these aims. Besides, these aims are treated as introduction of innovations in the teaching practice. The second agency involved in CPD is Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like the British Council, the Regional English Language Office (RELO), and other organizations. The CPD opportunities available through these agencies are often not mandatory. Finally, there are Teacher Associations (TAs) organizing several academic events for the purposes of CPD.

Emergent notion of teachers

Under the influence of rapid changes in socio-economic situation and the increasing use of information technology teachers are being redefined. The teacher as understood in transmission model paradigm as an expert transmitting knowledge to students is gradually becoming redundant. Based on personal experience of participation in ELT seminars and conferences in India in last ten years I can say that the government, industry, and society are defining a new teacher. Hargreaves (1999) discussing about teaching profession in the 21st century echoes such redefinition of teachers in present times. He says:

> The fate of teacher professionalism in this era is by no means fixed, but is being and will be argued about, struggled over and pulled in different directions in different places at different times. One possible outcome of these processes, is a new, postmodern professionalism that is broader, more flexible and more democratically inclusive of groups outside teaching and their concerns, that its predecessors. (1999: 14)

New roles and responsibilities for teachers are constantly and consistently fixed and re-fixed for teachers. They include notion of facilitator of learning rather than just transmit knowledge, counselor, coach, language expert, soft-skills trainer etc. Some of the responsibilities that teachers are expected to take up are as follows:

- Organize learning experiences based on constructivist and social constructivist notions of learning
- Acquire, use and impart information technology skills
- Manage vast amount of information beyond prescribed curriculum
- Focus on appropriate application of language skills
- Focus on teaching oral communication
- Orient students towards social, economic, and political issues
- Teach soft skills (such as skills for job interview, professional presentations, body language, group discussion and so on) etc.

Problematising CPD

In literature, CPD is treated as an instrument for educational change. Fraser et al (2007: 154) opine that CPD has to be located in wider policy agenda of lifelong learning for teachers. Further, research on educational change suggests that teachers' CPD is an essential part of enhancing school performance. CPD as understood by policy makers in India assumes following issues:

- Lifelong learning for professionals;
- A means of personal development;
- A means for individual professionals to ensure a measure of control and security in the often precarious modern workplace;
- A means of assuring a wary public that professionals are indeed up-to-date, given the rapid pace of technological advancement;
- A means whereby professional associations can verify that the standards of their professionals are being upheld;
- A means for employers to garner a competent, adaptable workforce. (after Fraser et al ibid:156)

Most of these issues echo in NCFTE's CPD agenda. To achieve these aims NCFTE suggests several routes which include use of distance media, sabbatical for study and research, participation in professional conferences and meetings etc. However, as said in Section 1, most of these routes are interpreted and understood differently by authorities and teachers. For example, educational authorities dictate what programmes teachers should attend. In such situations there is always a possibility that teachers may not be interested in those programmes and wish to learn something else which is not acknowledged by the authorities. Further, teachers can think that the programmes they wish to attend are crucial for the improvement in their work. The NCFTE (ibid: 69) says that teachers can be given 3-4 days duty leave to attend academic events. Here the question is that who will decide how these 3-4 days in a year be used. One of the consequences of this scenario is that teachers get alienated from CPD. Moreover, teachers' self-initiated CPD moves are not recognized by the authorities. Based on the experiment of English Teachers' Clubs (ETCs) the key concerns from teachers' perspectives include improving their own language proficiency, academic freedom for experimentation, support and recognition for the self-initiated CPD activities. But these issues are rarely addressed in CPD policy.

Moreover, CPD opportunities administered by three different agencies complicate the matter more. The mandatory CPD organized by the State often tries to orient teachers towards educational innovations. The NGOs often deal with innovative teaching methods and materials. The TAs often present teachers with a mixed bag some supporting existing situation and others advocating a change in them. This situation, which desperately needs thorough investigation, presents a fragmented picture of CPD with several mismatches between aims and expectations of teachers and CPD providing agencies. They present different discourses about teacher development. The NCTE contemplates reflective practice and delivers it in the form of transmission mode. The NGOs discourse of development presents a picture of liberating teachers from classroom problems but classrooms are governed by State education rules. TAs take up a middle path presenting a compromise between the two – the State and the NGOs.

Implications

There are several important implications that can be drawn from the foregoing discussion. Firstly, a very serious awareness raising move about CPD among all major stake holders in education is of vital importance. By this I mean that policy makers, educational authorities and school heads need to given a thorough orientation about the policy, process and philosophy of CPD. Secondly, if CPD has to achieve the task of school improvement, teacher development, and educational change freedom for teachers is the key. There needs to be some scope for teacher initiatives and support for self-guided CPD activity. Personalization of CPD where teachers can determine what to needs be learnt and how is essential. Lastly, CPD activity in any form like publications, presentations, self-help collaborative groups etc. need to be recognized as legitimate activity.

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Teacher Networks and Teacher Professional Development: A Study Report

Laxman Gnawali

Abstract

In Sanskrit, there is a saying 'Sanghe shaktih kalau yuge' which means organization holds the key to strength in modern times. The word organisation in our case refers to ELT teacher associations and networks. Being on a network makes a crucial difference in one's career and professional attitude. With the help of network one not only grows, develops and rises, but also gathers strength to help others to move on. In this paper I share a report on a small scale study on the relationship of teachers' professionalism to their being members of networks.

Background

Research findings (Gnawali 2001) indicate that in-service training with experiential learning approach and reflective enquiry through collaborative observation and action research would be appropriate teacher development strategies that would help teachers grow professionally. Action and reflection are the key elements that allow teachers to not use 'auto-pilot' (Tripp 1985 as cited in Gnawali 2001) and enable them to take informed actions which would lead to their professional development. However, experience also shows that there is a different issue related to teacher professional development.

In Sanskrit, there is a saying 'Sanghe shaktih kalau yuge' which means organization holds the key to strength in modern times. Here the word organisation means association and network. In a general sense this statement claims that in the time we live now, individuals become powerful only when they become members of an organization. In the context of the professional individuals, being on a professional network makes a crucial difference in one's career and professional attitude. With the help of network, one not only develops and rises, but also gathers strength to help others to move on. The members help the network to grow. Conversely, it's the members of the network who make the network itself as strong and learning-conducive as it can be. Such affiliation is also instrumental in developing leadership and innovation potential for academic institutions where the academics and professionalism further proliferate.

Emilie Durkheim says that individual human beings interact with one another in the traditional, especially agrarian, communities with a sense of belonging which he terms as mechanical bonding (Osborne & van Loon 2009). However, in the modern society such bonding crumbles as the individuals leave their greater family, relatives and the community in search of their livelihood, and once away and by themselves, they feel (but may not consciously realise or articulate) that they have lost that sense of belonging. Under compulsion and out of desire, these individuals seek affinity with people they can work and communicate with, and through whom they can get into wider circles. Durkheim calls this interaction organic bonding (Ibid.). This bonding is stronger and more functional when it acts as a tool to help individuals grow in their professions, self-actualize and be recognized in a broader circle. Helping teachers in this way is not only helping them to have a network but also help them to realize their full potential and forget the sense of loss of earlier bonding. The growing eagerness among teachers to start and sustain teacher networks/ associations is a phenomenon that seems to follow the above theory. Individual teachers who would not otherwise have met are leading international projects on teacher support. The project on Language Development for Primary English Teachers undertaken by the Horny Alumni from Nepal, India, Pakistan and Vietnam is an example. These alumni are members of teacher associations in their respective countries and also of the Hornby South/East Asia Regional group formed in Hanoi, Vietnam in 2003. So, there is a strong need to establish the issue of teacher networks and teacher professional development formally and academically in the mainstream teacher development discussions. While presenting this idea Mike Solly of the British Council ended his speech saying:

- Tell me and I will... Forget
- Show me and I will. ...Remember
- Involve me and I will...Understand
- Network me and I will. ...Grow (and help others to grow)
  (Personal communication, ELTeCS meeting, Sri Lanka 2004)

This realization triggered the idea of looking into the link between teacher professional development and the teacher networks to verify whether the above claim holds.

Conceptual framework

In the framework we have conceptualised, we see a two way process between a teacher network and the teachers who take membership of the network, as depicted in the figure.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
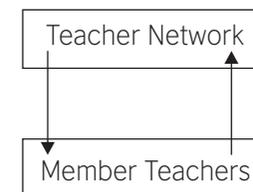
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was exploring the relationship between the teacher networks and professional development of the teachers who come into such networks. More specifically, the study intended to look into the issue how being on English language teacher network contributes, if it does, to the professional development of EFL teachers.

Issue statement

Though the causal link between the teacher networks and teacher professional development has been realised by individuals, there have been limited academic discussions and professional literature based on research on this phenomenon. One instance of academic research carried out in the area is a Masters thesis on teacher associations (TA) at Leeds University, UK (Falcao 2004). There are a few papers presented at various conferences in defence of the teacher associations showing their importance on teacher professional development (Allwright 1991). This shows that the issue of teacher networks in relation to educational change including teacher professional development has not yet fully come into the mainstream academic discussions.

Keeping this issue in mind, this study was carried out to find an answer to the question: How do English teacher networks facilitate, if they do, professional development of EFL teachers who join such networks? In so doing, it looked into the purposely designed strategies as well as resultant opportunities created by the teacher networks for facilitating professional development of its members.

Research design

This research was carried out as a preliminary study before embarking upon the full-fledged study towards my PhD which is in progress now. So, the participants were purposively chosen and were limited in number. Because the study was qualitative in nature, only five informants participated in the study. For this study, all informants were from Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA). Out of five, two were Central Committee office bearers and three were life members associated with NELTA for a long time. These participants responded to open ended probing interview questions. For obtaining basic information, various documents related to teachers' association and their professionalism development were reviewed.

Findings and discussion

The informants were active members of NELTA. All respondents had professional memberships seven to ten years old. They stated that they all regularly attended network activities such as workshops and conferences. They also subscribed to some electronic groups such as the NELTA yahoo group. Responding to the questions relating to membership of the network and its impact on these members' professional, social and personal lives, the respondents appreciated that their professional development was mainly due to the NELTA network. The following is the summary of their responses:

- All respondents' improvement in professionalism was facilitated by the teacher network. Before they came to NELTA, they were limited to the traditional methods and never published any articles. Once inside NELTA, they started presenting at conferences and contributing to journals.

- These respondents felt that the exposure like attending the TESOL and IATEFL conferences would not have been possible if they had not joined NELTA. Because they came to NELTA, they learned about such opportunities and benefited from them. The network gave them exposure to national and international events and experiences. It also made them familiar with key individuals with acclaimed expertise and experience.

- The network gave them psychological comfort inside the classroom. When these respondents started participating in NELTA activities, they developed a feeling that their classroom performance was better than before.

- The respondents realized that their knowledge and skills were translated into their students' achievements. The students' performance was found to be improved in majority cases while not noticed in some other cases.

- Because the network brought them and their skills to the notice of those who needed their service, their earning also increased after joining network.

- Until they came to the network, they never felt the need for publication. But once inside, they saw their colleagues of similar standing contributing to journals, so they also started writing papers and submitting to journals. Most articles in the NELTA Journal are contributed by those who are actively involved in this network.

- After they came to hold responsible positions in NELTA they realized that they had to deliver training to other teachers. This was useful in two ways - one, they felt that they had been upgraded and two, their teaching practice got better in their own classrooms. All respondents were supported to develop as trainers, which was made possible by the network.

- Because they had to be at par with other colleagues and also because they got the information, the respondents read latest books related to

ELT. The respondents claimed that the ELT professionals who were not in touch with NELTA were less aware of the resources that were available to them.

- The respondents feel that being on the NELTA committee also brought them extra respect in their social circle. Relatives and friends looked up to them for being on the committee of NELTA, which has branches all over the country and has over 1600 life members. The membership of NELTA was also identified with the Presidents who are publicly well-known academicians in the country, not just in NELTA.

- When asked to state in a nutshell the benefits of being on a network, the respondents listed professional development and growth, wider career perspective, increased social status, increment in creativity and innovation and leadership development as the major benefits.

- When asked whether the network also benefitted from these respondents, they said that NELTA evolved into a better network during their time because they supported NELTA in four different ways. Firstly, using their connections, they raised funds for the NELTA activities such as the organizing conferences, workshops and training, publishing the NELTA Journal and the Newsletters etc. Secondly, they supported the NELTA activities in various ways such as delivering free training programmes in districts and editing the Journal and Newsletter. Thirdly, they made personal initiatives to expand the NELTA network nationally and internationally. NELTA took the TESOL and IATEFL affiliate status with their initiatives. Fourthly, because they showed strong dedication and commitment to professionalism and to NELTA, other members were inspired to give more time and service to NELTA activities.

Conclusion

The above findings establish that the NELTA and its members have a reciprocal relationship. Apart from giving an identity, being on the NELTA has opened up several opportunities for the members. NELTA has also grown and developed with the opportunities and resources its members have brought to it. We can safely predict that the same applies to other teacher professional networks. So, fostering teacher networks can be a sustainable way to teacher professional development.

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Overcoming Resistance to Change: Karnataka Teacher Empowerment Programme

Mary Flavia D'Souza and Asha Bharath Rao

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to describe a training programme implemented jointly by the British Council, Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana (SSA) and Department of State Educational Research and Training (DSERT) Karnataka supported by Unicef for primary school teachers in government schools in Karnataka. The overall aim is to give teachers of English new skills and knowledge and increase their confidence to conduct their lessons in English. The training programme has been very well received by teacher educators and teachers alike. During the programme techniques to increase learner interaction are explored with the aim of giving learners every opportunity to communicate in English.

Introduction

Teaching of English has gained a lot of significance in recent years in the context of globalisation. However, in a multilingual society like the one in India, it becomes extremely difficult to teach a foreign language to which teachers and learners do not have regular exposure in the society. It is in this context that SSA, Karnataka planned a 20 day teacher empowerment programme in the teaching of English.   British Council and Unicef came forward to support this programme especially in providing material and human resource support.

This paper is prepared based on the experiences of the first two phases as observed by two Master Trainers (MTs). Among various issues that were considered during the training overcoming the resistance among teachers to change was a big challenge. The authors used the activities suggested in the Trainer Notes prepared by British Council to help them to overcome the resistance. This paper narrates the experiences of the authors in conducting the training programme making use of these activities and also activities designed by them in their training sessions and their effect on the participants.

Activity 1 - Warmer Circle talk

The main purpose of this activity is to make the participants speak because most of the teachers working in government schools have studied in their mother tongue and they find difficult to communicate in English. This activity helped them to talk with their partner using their existing vocabulary.

Participants were asked to stand up and form two circles, one inside the other, with inside circle facing out and outside circle facing in, so each person stood facing the other. It was explained that they would be asked to discuss a topic with their partner, then after one minute the outer circle would move round one space so that everyone would have a new partner and would be given a new topic to discuss. After one minute the process would be repeated.

Participants were asked to discuss the following topics:

1. What do you mean by 'change'?
2. What are the factors that influence change?
3. Why do some people resist change?

After the discussion, they were asked to turn to the facilitator standing at the centre of the circle/go back to their places. They were then asked them to respond to each of the questions. Anyone who had a different answer could speak in turn. Finally the facilitator summed up making use of slides.

Considered answers for summing up

1. What do you mean by 'change'?
- To alter to make different; to cause to pass from one state to another; as, to change the position, character, or appearance of a thing;
- A passing from one phase to another

- A change becomes acceptable when it satisfies the expectations. If the change does not satisfy the expectations of people involved, it is not acceptable. Change in one area invariably influences other areas too. If we do not keep up with the change that is taking place in the related areas, we become obsolete.

2. What are the factors that influence change?
- Expectations, necessity, congenial atmosphere, acceptance by stakeholder/colleagues/co-workers, changes that are taking place in other related areas, one's ability to foresee the need to change and bring about changes

3. Why do some people resist change?
- Lack of confidence, complacency, insecurities, loss of the security of a comfort zone, lack of information/knowledge, lack of guidance, no clarity of purpose.

Reflections

This activity set the participants on a self reflective mode. They reflected over

their own practices before coming to any conclusion. It was also observed that when the participants talked about why people resist changes, they were talking about themselves without any inhibitions because they were not asked to say who they were talking about or had in their minds while making their observations. A reflective activity is perhaps more useful than a scholarly lecture.

Activity 2 - Individual work [Questionnaire]

The objective of the questionnaire was to identify learner types. Once the learners identify the type to which to belong they can decide whether they can do things on their own, seek help from others or need extra motivation.

Instructions: Please shade one box for each of the items to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

S. No.	Items	Completely agree				Completely disagree
1	I can speak English fluently.					
2	I have complete knowledge of the topic					
3	I plan well for my class.					
4	I can reflect over my class and bring changes in my practice.					
5	I can change my language according to the situation.					
6	I can change the course of my lesson to suit the needs of learners.					
7	I have never fallen short of appropriate words to express my ideas					
8	I can argue out my cause.					
9	I can express my views even if they are different from that of the group.					
10	I can accept new ideas for facilitating better learning.					

Using the response given to this questionnaire, four categories of learners could be identified as follows:

1.Those who have the ability and practice it - No need for any intervention

2.Those who have the ability but don't practice - Need intervention Maybe they lack confidence or are not very sure of their knowledge. They need encouragement, motivation, guidance to initiate reflections bounded rationality.

3. Those who don't have the ability, but still practice – they blindly practice whatever they are taught. Their practice may not have a long term vision. They need to be appreciated for whatever they are doing and then encouraged to develop a base.

4. Those who don't have the ability and don't practice. These people need guidance, motivation and also regular inputs.

Reflections

This activity made the participants reflect over their own practice as learners. Since they were asked to shade the relevant sections, the questionnaire as such gave a graphical description of their practices. This proved to be a very helpful activity for the MTs in planning their activities catering to the individual needs of each of their participants.

Activity 3 - Planning a lesson

A topic was announced abruptly and the participants were asked to present a lesson on the topic without planning. The topic given was teaching prepositions. The participants could not really come out with any worthwhile ideas. After this they were given a lesson plan format which was half complete. They were asked to complete it and then present the lesson. After the participants completed the plan, they were able to say confidently how they would go about the lesson on prepositions. The following points were discussed while summing up the activity.

1. Planning gives a definiteness to the class
2. Being sure of the objectives gives confidence and a definite purpose
3. Planning also decides the course of the class. So the teacher does not have to fumble for ideas.

Reflections

This activity showed the participants how good planning can make them fluent in their classroom processes. Since a part of the planning template was filled and given, they could complete it without spending much time on it. Perhaps they need to be weaned from such help gradually, but starting with

some help always boosts the confidence level. It is only then that teachers can realise their abilities without being alarmed about consequences.

Activity 4 - Debate and Brainstorming

The activity is to conduct a debate on a topic given. It has been observed that teachers are not able to start if they are not prepared and that this causes a lot of resistance. So in order to help teachers come out with ideas, a brainstorming session was conducted on the following statement:

'Children should be punished for their mistakes'

The brainstorming activity generated a number of ideas for and against the statement. Participants came out with their own ideas without any inhibitions. The list was put on the board. The participants were divided into two groups and asked to debate. Now there was no need for any time for planning. The groups debated well on the topic adding their own expressions, examples and ideas.

Reflections

Announcing an activity abruptly will create insecurities among the learners. Preparing learners for the activity enables them to involve in the learning activity to the best of their abilities.. Brainstorming is a very useful tool in the hands of a language teacher, especially to make learner think.

Activity 5 - Activity Circuit for providing practice

This activity is to develop vocabulary of the participants. The activities helped the them to acquire new vocabulary. It not only gave an opportunity to know words but also to know the definitions and description of the words. When they have minimum vocabulary they will definitely involve in the activity and try to enrich their vocabulary without which they develop inhibition and resist to change.

The whole class was divided into three groups. Each group was asked to conduct one activity within three minutes. After a bell rang, the groups moved to the next activity. So in each group, all the members were involved, helped each other to complete the activity and moved to the next activity.

Names of the activities

1. Pelmanism – A game wherein cards with words and the definitions of the words are put in two separate boxes. A learner picks up one card from the word box and the other from the definition box. If the cards match the learner wins a point and gets another chance to play.

2. First to point – Some words are written on a sheet of paper and given to one group. One of the participants in the group gives a definition of the word without telling the actual word. Other members of the group are expected to point at the word. Whoever points at the appropriate word is the winner.

3. Call my bluff – Three questions/statements are presented for identifying one word. Out of them two are wrong and one is right. The learners should identify the right question or the statement.

Reflections

The quick change of activities created a lot of enthusiasm among the learners. As they were not asked to make any presentation in isolation, individual participants felt safe in their groups. This in turn ensured better participation. Perhaps learners need to feel secure in order to participate fully in an activity. This activity just allowed them to play. The participants understood the reason for doing the activity. Team work was emphasised so participants who were not confident could be involved and contribute to some extent which helped them to shun their inhibition and resistance.

Conclusion

The activity based processes have been found to be useful in ensuring better participation and activities that do not end in judgments are of great importance .Adult learners, unlike young children, have a lot of inhibitions and hence resist changes. They need to feel secure first and only then do they get involved in the activities conducted. The ultimate aim of any teacher training programme should be to initiate teachers into a reflective cycle and provide them with necessary inputs as and when they need them. Hence it is necessary to initiate a self reflective practice among the participants. One reflective activity would be far more effective than a lecture

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Challenges of English Language Teacher Training in Rural India

Nabanita Baruah

Abstract
By offering better economic opportunities and providing exposure to the western entertainment media, the English language has come to occupy an ever important place in people's everyday life in urban India. This paper argues that teaching students to acquire functional English language proficiency in rural schools could help prevent a potential consequence of this trend - the widening of urban-rural economic disparity. To do that, the English language teachers in rural areas have to be trained first. However, there are formidable challenges that include infrastructural bottlenecks, an urban bias of teacher training programmes and, most importantly, a pervasive lack of motivation among the teachers.

Introduction

There has been a noticeable change in the place that the English language occupies in our everyday life in India. Underlying this change are a number of factors including greater economic opportunities that the knowledge of this language offers, increased exposure of an average household to English language media and a significant expansion in the use of Internet and mobile phones. Concurrently, there has been a change in the perception about the English language. Knowledge of English is now seen more as a necessary skill for everyday living rather than a source of class identity as it has been traditionally construed in Indian society. However, these changes are more visible in urban and semi-urban areas than in rural areas where almost 70 per cent of the Indian population lives. A widening gap in people's English language skills between rural and urban areas has economic implications with a potential for rising urban-rural income inequality.

The new reality and changing societal perception, in turn, have entailed a change in the way English language is taught and learnt. Some of the recent changes in the English language curricula – particularly at the primary and secondary level education – have been directed towards a shift in emphasis from grammar-based written English language proficiency to functional proficiency. While this is an important step in the right direction, it has posed serious challenges to the English language teachers who work in rural areas. In addition to the perennial bottlenecks of poor infrastructure and an alleged urban bias of teacher training programmes, a pervasive lack of motivation may be a formidable constraint in preparing those teachers for effective implementation of these changes. It is in this context that this article discusses the importance and challenges of training English language teachers in rural areas.

Importance of English language teacher training

In general, primary and secondary level teachers have general or subject-specific academic qualifications and often have no specialized training in teaching techniques. Thus, they acquire teaching skills through 'learning by doing'. In a dynamic environment characterized by changes in the focus and content of school curricula, in student characteristics that are related to their learning abilities and in societal needs and preferences defined by broader changes in the society, this may not be a very effective way of skill building. Even trained teachers may need retraining. Thus, there is a general need for regular training for teachers irrespective of their academic backgrounds and preparations.

This need for training is even more pressing for English language teachers in India, particularly in rural areas. This emanates from the new reality of a predominant position that the English language has come to occupy in our everyday life in recent times. In India, English language skills have traditionally been considered as a symbol of elite social status. Its origin goes back to the British policy of creating a class of English-educated Indians who were to be the interlocutor between the rulers and the ruled. Even after independence, better prospects of employment in government and businesses, and easier leaps to the positions of power made the knowledge of English a very attractive tool for social mobility. More recently, the English language skills of a sizeable population have contributed significantly to India's economic performance.

After India's economic liberalization had begun in the early 1990s, service exports to the rest of the world have grown very rapidly (World Bank 2010). Unlike in merchandise trade, language is very important in services trade. Furthermore, mainly due to a large number of English-educated people skilled in science and technology, India has become a major centre for information and communication technology (ICT) based industries such as software development and a major destination for offshore Business Process Outsourcing (BPO). The BPOs include a wide range of back office services such as human resources, accounting, finance, and front office services such as customer contact. The knowledge of English is critically important for these industries that usually pay higher salaries. According to Azam, Chin, and Prakash (2009), being fluent in English increases wages by 32 per cent in India. The expanded possibility of getting well-paid jobs in these new service industries has made it clear to a large section of the society that knowing English is a necessary skill for livelihood and good living.

The other significant development is that Indian households have now greater exposure to the English language through audio-visual media, particularly television. With the proliferation of satellite and cable television, there has been a rise in the viewership of English language programmes. English has entered the daily life of many Indians through the use of the internet as well. Since most worldwide websites are in English, their uses require the knowledge of the language. Furthermore, the increased use of mobile phones (including smart phones) to send and receive messages, to listen to radio, and/or to surf the internet has contributed to this trend. However, these trends are mostly confined to urban or semi-urban areas.

Rural communities are falling far behind and, unless some efforts are made, the economic divide between the rural and urban areas is likely to widen as a result of this discrepancy, besides other factors. English language education in rural areas with an emphasis on functional proficiency should be an essential part of such efforts. In this context, the recent changes in the English language curricula that emphasize functional proficiency including proficiency in communication skills (speaking and listening, in particular) have been a step in the right direction.

English language teacher training in rural areas: the challenges

A vast number of rural schools are vernacular medium schools where functional proficiency of the English language has rarely been emphasized. Further, most teachers in such schools have received their education and training under a system that focused on grammar-based written English proficiency. They rarely use the language for communication. Thus, of the four skills involved in language learning, most teachers are usually deficient in listening and speaking. Communicative language teaching requires a multi-dimensional approach that facilitates context-based learning, activity -based learning, situational, functional and skills based learning. Largely because of a lack of proper training, most teachers are not familiar with this approach. Therefore, a shift in emphasis to functional proficiency requires rigorous preparation of teachers. However, there are formidable challenges.

In the absence of formal training, the teachers will have to train themselves. However, there are infrastructural bottlenecks because of which it is difficult for teachers in rural areas to have access to appropriate references or guidance. There is no or very limited access to good libraries, to higher education institutions, and to the internet. In some cases, even if there is internet access, a majority of the teachers are computer illiterate.

The government-sponsored training programmes are often organized in urban centres, albeit for good reasons. These locations are easily accessible from different corners of a state or a region. However, there seems to be an urban bias in participation as well. The teachers in rural schools often do not receive any information about the training programmes. Even if they have the information, there are other constraints. The schools do not have the necessary means to support the teachers to participate in these programmes. There are no extra funds available to provide financial support. Also, there is a shortage of teachers in rural schools and the absence of even one teacher from the school disrupts the teaching schedule.

Perhaps the most daunting challenge is a pervasive lack of motivation among the teachers for professional development through training due to a number of reasons. First, students are often not motivated. Many of them come from poor socioeconomic background, where returns from English language learning are not perceived to be very high. Students sometimes harbour a negative attitude towards learning English, which makes it challenging and often frustrating for teachers to teach the language. Frequent absence of students from the class makes their task even harder. Second, most parents in rural areas are illiterate and they are not involved in their children's education. They are not only oblivious of the content and quality of their children's education, but also disinterested in their progress in studies. As a consequence, some teachers do not feel accountable to the parents and therefore often care less about the effectiveness of their teaching. Third, the physical environment of rural schools also contributes to the lack of motivation among teachers as well as students. The school buildings are in a dilapidated state. The classrooms are usually small and furniture arrangements make inefficient use of space. English language teaching with an objective of achieving functional proficiency necessitates students' participation through activities such as speaking and listening. Inefficient use of space, however, restricts the teacher's movements and prevents him/her from monitoring students and guiding them in doing language activities. Most rural schools do not have the necessary audio-visual equipment. Therefore, even if teachers receive training, they will not be able to use those methods due to this lack of infrastructure. Fourth, teachers' salaries are relatively low and in many states the payment of the monthly salary is irregular. In urban areas, teachers may supplement their monthly income by providing private tutoring. For those teachers, there is an added incentive for receiving training: it will enable them to use the newly acquired techniques to teach the new materials introduced under the new English language curricula in their tutoring sessions. In rural areas, due to poor economic backgrounds, students cannot afford to pay for private tutoring. Thus, there is not much scope for the teachers in those areas for supplemental income through tutoring, which in turn leads to a lack of motivation for receiving training. Fifth, there is no formal reward for teaching performance and, therefore, there is no incentive to improve teaching through professional development programmes. Finally, for most teachers there is hardly any prospect of professional mobility and hence no incentive for professional development

through training or otherwise.

Some of these challenges require large investments and long-term solutions, while others can easily be resolved with relatively little effort and in a short time. I list a few easily implementable recommendations based on our discussion above.

First, regular training programmes should be organized in rural areas for English language teachers and these programmes should be made mandatory.

Second, basic computer literacy should be an integral part of such programmes and the use of computer and the Internet should be made a necessary tool of teaching English. Nowadays, providing computers with Internet connections is a relatively low-cost investment. Besides being a source of much needed resources for effective teaching such provision will also break the monotony of teaching and learning in the traditional way. This may also facilitate distance training in which the trainee and the trainer do not have to be in the same location. In some remote places facing a lack of infrastructure, prepackaged study/activity materials (stored in CD or flash drives) can be provided during the training programmes.

Third, there should be some general guidelines for efficient and effective furniture arrangement that facilitates student-teacher interactions and enhances motivation.

Fourth, in the light of the increasing importance of English language teaching in rural areas, there should be at least two trained English language teachers in each rural school. This should be made an integral part of the government's education policy.

Finally, with the revised pay packages, teachers' salary has increased significantly in recent times. However, there are many schools in rural areas, which are awaiting government recognition and aid. As a result, the teachers in those schools do not receive any salary year after year. These teachers should be included in teacher training programmes and they should receive monetary incentives for participation.

Concluding remarks

In recognition of the fact that English language has come to play an increasingly important role in our economic, social and cultural life, there has been a shift in emphasis in English language teaching towards functional proficiency. In this context, this article argues that there is a pressing need for rigorous training of English language teachers who are not ready to meet the challenges, particularly in rural areas. It contends that, in addition to the perennial bottlenecks of poor infrastructure and an alleged urban bias of

teacher training programmes, a pervasive lack of motivation is a formidable constraint in preparing those teachers for effective implementation of these changes in curricula. Any training programme designed for English language teachers in rural areas should address these challenges so that the widening rural-urban gap can be bridged effectively. This article also dwells on a few easily implementable reforms that will go a long way in resolving some of the challenges of English language teachers training in rural areas.

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Demystifying Teacher Talk Time

Nandini Sarangal & Sheelu Mary Alex

Abstract

During training programmes a trainer tries to evolve strategies to deal with the issues and concerns of the participating teachers. One of the issues has always been to make students speak and give response to the questions asked by the teacher. It is important to make the participating teachers understand that unless students are given greater opportunities to speak, discuss and interact with their classmates, their reticence will persist. In such situations it is very useful to introduce to participating teachers the concept of 'Teacher Talk Time' (TTT) through activities, interaction and group discussions. The paper dwells on the issues of what Teacher Talk Time (TTT) is, the need for reducing TTT, managing TTT as Quality Talk Time (QTT) and how and when to reduce TTT.

A Classroom Scenario

The teacher has a problem
She can't think what to do
Her students sit and look at her
Their lips are stuck with glue
She wants to make them speak in class
She knows that speaking's tough
But they just sit and wait and stare
This teacher had enough.
*(Training Manual produced by the
British Council under Project English, Delhi)*

These lines depict the anxiety of the teacher who expects her students to speak in English and give response to her questions. However, in a typical Indian classroom where the teacher dominates the classroom and a silent class is considered to be an ideal disciplined class, there is very little scope for the students to talk, to discuss or to interact.

Teaching of literature usually means reading the text aloud and the teacher supplying the meanings of difficult words and correcting faulty pronunciations. Many a times translation is widely used for a variety of purposes. The text is likely to be summarized by the teacher followed by a series of questions and answers focusing primarily on the factual details.

Ironically, in such teacher-centric classrooms the teacher wants her students to come up with wonderful, technically correct responses and that too only during question answer sessions. Such a scenario leads one to some significant questions:

(i) When did the students get time to discuss?
(ii) How can questions pertaining to factual details develop analytical thinking?
(iii) How do students shed their hesitation to speak in English?
(iv) When do students get an opportunity to develop speaking skills?
(v) Does it create an atmosphere in which students learn to think and speak independently?

The answers to these questions and to the problem of the teacher who wants her students to speak may lie in demystifying the notion of teacher talk time. There is no doubt that Teacher Talk Time is one of the sensitive issues that need to be dealt with care during in-service training programmes, especially with the teachers who are under the assumption that teachers are the repository of all knowledge that has to be imparted/passed on to the students. Therefore, there is a need to sensitize teachers regarding the disadvantages of too much traditional Teacher Talk by means of discussions, which can be initiated, for example, by using a chant, "Teacher has a problem…" quoted at the beginning of this paper.

Introducing the Concept of Teacher Talk with the Chant

The group is divided into pairs. The participants are asked to enlist as many rhyming words as they can think of to rhyme with the words 'You' and 'Stuff'. The trainer writes the words identified by participants on the chalk board. The trainer now recites the chant and stops at a blank in the chant to let the participants fill in the gap with a suitable word from the list they have on the board. This part is over as soon as all the blanks are filled in with the correct words.

The trainer then asks the group to recite the chant by saying the first line loudly and second line in whispers and so on. For a second recitation all male participants recite the odd lines while all female participants recite the even lines. In this way the participants recite the chant with a slight change in the method of recitation, which can continue for four to five times.

Then the trainer starts erasing the words of the chant in a phased manner. Every time the participants try to recite the chant, recalling the erased words and thus memorising the part automatically. The trainer only helps them through appropriate gestures related to the chant. Gradually in 3-4 steps the entire chant gets erased, but the participants are still able to recite it easily. A

simple question at the end of the activity – "Who talked more - the trainer or the learners?" – helps to introduce the concept of 'Teacher Talk'. The obvious answer to the question "the learners talked more" gives a clear message that "To teach we need not say all that we know, only what is useful for the learners to hear". The participant teachers appreciate the idea of teaching rhymes in this way. The teachers get an idea how Teacher Talk Time (TTT) can be effectively used as Quality Talk Time (QTT). Moreover, appropriate gestures help to reduce Teacher Talk Time further. To further develop the concept of TTT amongst the participants, the text of a short story of Miss Smith is handed over to them.

Miss Smith, a Teacher
Miss Smith arrived at school feeling very fresh on Monday morning.

She walked into class and told the students to open their books at page 45. It was a new chapter. She began to read and paused at the end of each sentence. When she had finished she asked a few questions. As usual, her favorite students at the front of the class answered. She smiled at them and read the text again. She picked out a student, at the front of the class, and asked her to read a sentence. During this reading she shouted at some boys at the back of the class who were chatting, "you will learn nothing if you do not pay attention!" She asked some more students at the front of the class to read a sentence each. When the text was finished she asked the class "do you understand?"

All the children nodded and said "yes miss".

Miss Smith left the class feeling a bit tired. Another useful lesson for the students, she told herself. But she didn't understand why she felt tired.

Next day...
"Miss Smith ran to school on Tuesday feeling very excited.

She had a dream about her students and she wanted to try something new. She had suddenly realized that they weren't bad or stupid.
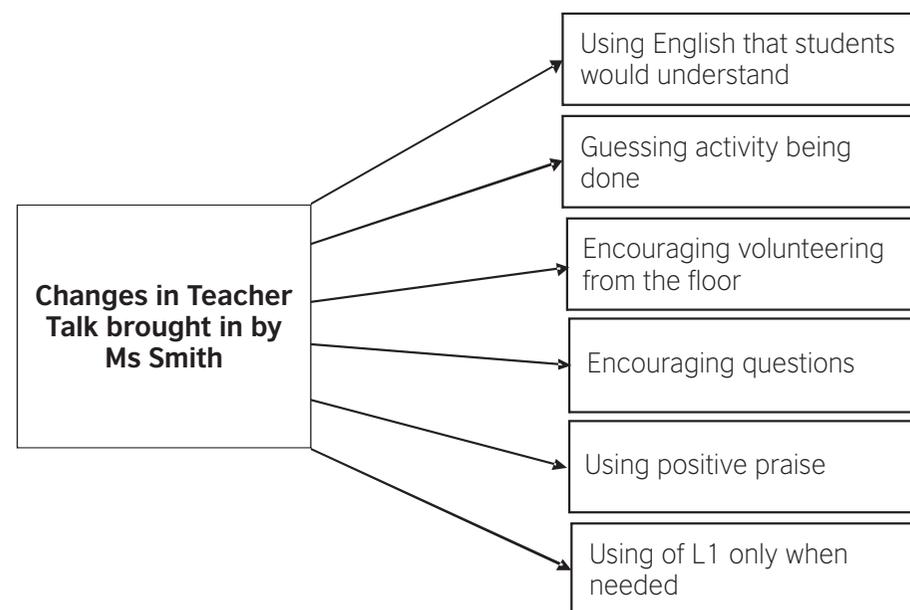
Before they opened their books she asked them to guess things about the story. The students began to look at each other in surprise. One child, a boy, a monster at the back said "I know Ma'am!" and Miss Smith listened to his idea.

Then she wrote some words on the board. She asked them to look at these words and do some more guessing. They worked in groups and soon became very busy. She asked for more ideas and lots of hands went in the air. "Some good ideas children" she said, "now let's see if you are correct".

She asked the students to open their books and check their guesses. Then she asked them if their guesses were right. One child said "I don't understand 'monster', Ma'am" so she explained in Hindi. The class laughed.

And Miss Smith laughed too. I don't feel so tired today, she thought, as she walked home. And she wondered why?

The Story shows a shift in the perspective by Miss Smith in her teaching methodology. Based on the story the trainer tries to figure out with the participants some changes pertaining to Teacher Talk brought in by Ms Smith in her Classroom teaching.

```
                                            ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                            │ Using English that students │
                                            │ would understand          │
                                            └─────────────────────────┘
                                            ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                            │ Guessing activity being  │
                                            │ done                      │
                                            └─────────────────────────┘
┌──────────────────┐                        ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Changes in Teacher │                      │ Encouraging volunteering │
│ Talk brought in by │ ───────────→         │ from the floor            │
│ Ms Smith          │                        └─────────────────────────┘
└──────────────────┘                        ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                            │ Encouraging questions     │
                                            └─────────────────────────┘
                                            ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                            │ Using positive praise     │
                                            └─────────────────────────┘
                                            ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                            │ Using of L1 only when     │
                                            │ needed                    │
                                            └─────────────────────────┘
```

Why Reduce TTT
Teachers agree that spoken English skills are now increasingly needed for higher studies and jobs. Even students seem to be very keen in learning speaking in English. A needs analysis survey of the students and teachers of some primary schools run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi in October 2010 revealed that majority of the students showed a clear inclination and keenness towards learning to speak the English language. For the students who don't have any exposure to English at home, the classroom is the only

place where they can practice the language. Hence students should receive more opportunities to speak in the classroom when learning English language as a foreign language. This clearly explains why there is a need to reduce TTT and enhance student talk time (STT). Some key objectives of this practice may be listed as below:

- To improve attention and retention span in students.
- To take out the element of monotony and a situation of students' "switch off".
- To make classroom teaching more interesting by involving student talk.
- To let students practice speaking skills effectively.
- To encourage independent thinking among students.
- To create scope for students' autonomy and responsibility in learning.
- To help teacher for a reality check to understand if the objectives of the lesson are being fulfilled and giving expected learning outcomes.

Striking a balance with Student Talk Time

In course of teaching there may be some lessons or specific stages in a lesson where a teacher needs to talk for an extended period of time, like:

- Narrating anecdotes
- Story telling
- Model reading

Further, many teachers often put forward an argument in favour of longer TTT that students need exposure to proper spoken English, with stress on diction, intonation, accent, pronunciation, etc, through standard classroom readings by the teacher, as this may be the only time for many students to hear good spoken English. Undoubtedly listening activities are important for students to develop good listening and comprehension skills. But there has to be a balance between listening and speaking, and even listening activities need not be uninterrupted monologue.

There can be a good combination of anecdote or story telling and teacher-student interaction, to make the students "stay connected". The teacher can encourage her students to interrupt during the monologue to ask questions or make comments. If they don't, the teacher herself can take a pause as an indication that she expects some response. The teacher may frame in advance a few guess questions regarding characters, places, events, etc related to the story. Such guess questions add a surprise element to the story, thereby helping students visualize the situation. It enhances their imagination and brings in excitement to check their guesses. Students can pick and choose a few phrases, idioms or dialogues to be used in a

subsequent speaking activity. Furthermore, even student talk is effective when students move ahead of simple drilling of the language and actively use the target language in new situations. So, we need to ensure that drills are followed by real student talk.

How to reduce TTT

The strategies to reduce TTT to make EFL classrooms more communicative can be clubbed under three major heads linked to each other:
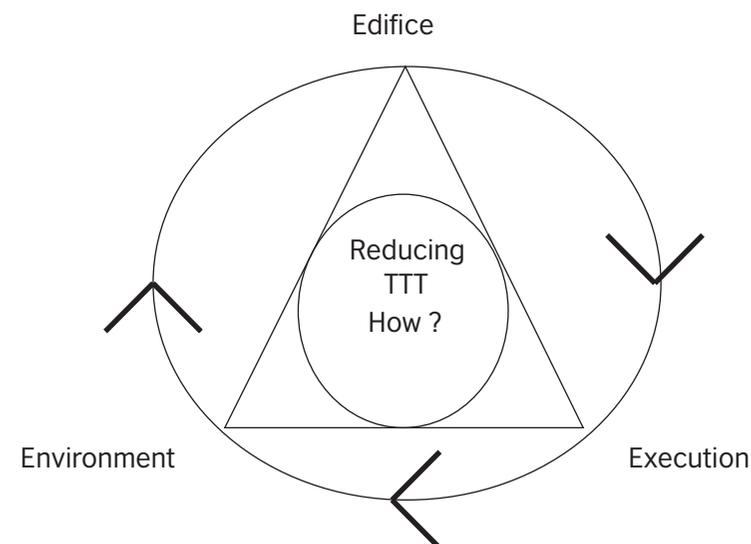
Edifice here means a comprehensive structure for planning lessons by:
- having more scope for STT activities.
- preparing activities of the level of students but challenging as well.
- framing instructions beforehand so that they are simple concise and structured. Clear stages in instructions save time and avoid repetition in explanation.
- using inductive methods to teach new ideas. Such methods lead to self discovery of finding solutions.
- leaving some time for feedback and reflection by students.

Execution A good plan goes well if the execution justifies it, which means:
- Howsoever staged the instructions are, an appropriate voice modulation and clarity in delivery is very important.

- Elicit answers and concepts from the students themselves i.e. elicit and not explain.
- Ask open ended questions that help to develop analytical thinking in students and stimulate the communication process. Predictable questions with responses in Yes/No are often very deceptive.
- Ask follow up questions instead of echoing the student responses.
- Don't rush to fill the silence with TTT. Give students some time to formulate answer before they speak.

An **Environment** that makes students feel comfortable and confident to speak has to be created by:
- Using an appropriate body language.
- Encouraging students to participate.
- Giving boost to students' confidence by praising them.
- Providing worksheets with instructions, examples, exercise questions, etc that they read on their own and understand.
- Making students feel comfortable, even if they make mistakes, especially while practicing fluency.
- Adopting suitable correction techniques like having mental notes of mistakes instead of interrupting the speaker in between.
- Developing listening culture in the class, by being a good example yourself.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that to achieve the objective of reducing TTT, proper edifice i.e. planning of a lesson is required, which should lead to effective execution of the lesson plan through STT activities for creating a conducive environment for encouraging student talk, which in-turn will help achieve increased STT.

Conclusion

The paper started with a problem of a teacher and now the teacher may have a solution. She may adopt this approach towards TTT which can help her students shed their hesitation to speak L2. She needs a comprehensive change in perspective like Miss Smith in terms of planning, body language, teaching methodology, students encouragement and creating listening culture. But any change at any level first demands a conviction, positive attitude and a change in mindset. We can't understand if the choice is wise or not until we live it. All it takes is just a bit more lesson planning and preparation to provide the students a learning environment that they deserve.

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Using SMS to Enhance English Language Proficiency of Teachers

Nivedita V. Bedadur and Tapasya Saha

Abstract

This paper describes a research study on the use of SMS to enhance English Language Capacity of Adult Learners (Teachers). The objective of the study is to enhance access to learning, to study learner participation and proficiency in English Language of teachers who are deprived of access due to economic or other factors. The target group of the study comprises teachers teaching literacy and numeracy skills to children of construction workers. After a series of workshops to facilitate English Language Capacity building, it was realized that the group was not making significant progress. This was because the group had no opportunity to speak or write English beyond the workshops. The learners and the facilitator felt the need to keep in touch through regular and structured opportunities to read and write with constant support and feedback. Thus SMS was explored as a medium of learning. The results of the study are available in two phases. The learner's motivation and confidence levels show significant increase in the first phase. Recording, mapping of learner progress and instant feedback led to movement from plateau stage to a grasp of challenging target structures in the second phase

Introduction

In India there are thousands of teachers teaching subjects other than English in Government, Private and Non Formal schools, who aspire to speak, read and write English for career enhancement or status. Primary school teachers with other necessary qualifications and subject proficiency are often at a disadvantage, where promotion mandates English language proficiency. Most teachers teaching in State Board Primary Schools are required to teach English along with other subjects. They have almost no opportunities for capacity building in English language content or pedagogy. Most of these teachers have learnt English at the school level. Despite this exposure to the language, their language skills are minimal and replete with errors. Confidence& levels are very low. Acquisition of proficiency requires provisioning time and money. Short duration face-to-face interventions are not very helpful.

Brief review of related literature: studies on M (mobile) learning

A review of the studies conducted on m-learning in Asia revealed that experiments have been conducted on the viability of SMS to support English language learning modules. Studies on the use of SMS have dealt with SMS for vocabulary enhancement or as an assessment tool, SMS has been a part of the adult learning package in some studies; one study in Bangladesh deals with the use of SMS as a support tool for in service teacher training.

1. In 2004 Thornton and Houser studied the use of mobile phones in Japan to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) at a Japanese University. They studied the learning of vocabulary through SMS. They emailed short mini lessons to students three times a day. The results indicated that SMS students learned over twice the number of vocabulary words as web students and improved their scores twice as much. (Thornton and Houser 2004).

2. In June 2008, Claire Kennedy and Mike Levy simulated an experiment in sending regular SMS messages to support language learning and vocabulary learning in particular, at beginners' level, in Italian at an Australian University. They had earlier conducted a trial with students at high intermediate level. (Levy & Kennedy, 2005)

3. In 2009 in Bangladesh the BBC 'Janala project' turned the mobile phone into a low-cost education device by offering hundreds of three minute audio lessons and SMS quizzes through people's handsets.

4. In Philippines the Molave Development Foundation led research on the viability of SMS for non formal distance education. This project termed as Project MIND involved a partnership with Alternative Learning Services. This project examined the viability of SMS based support for distance learning. The modules termed as MIND your English and MIND your Mathematics were designed in a manner that SMS quizzes had to be passed in order to complete the module.

5. In Mongolia the Ulaanbaatar project involved partnership of the English for Special Purposes Foundation (ESPF) and the Health Sciences University of Mongolia. The ESPF created an English module that consisted of a workbook, audio cassette with SMS messages required for completion of the module.

6. In 2007 in another pilot project in Bangladesh SMS was used to support long distance teacher training for in-service teachers. (Pouezevara& Khan, 2007a, 2007b) In the project design the trainer used SMS facility on the mobile phones provided to the trainees to send motivational messages, reminders and assessment questions to trainees (Valk, J-H, Rashid, A. T. & Elder, L 2010)

Rationale: Why use SMS as a tool for language learning?

The target learners under consideration are teachers who spend 8 hours per day working and commuting. They have very little opportunity to practice their English language skills in the home or in a professional space. These teachers have attended several capacity building workshops but have not been able to carry over their language ability to everyday usage. At this stage the author and the target group felt that they needed daily mentoring. The author then thought of using SMS as a tool for providing opportunities for language use daily, thus ensuring a live learning laboratory for moving forward in the continuum from inter language to target language.

The pedagogical reasons for using SMS are that it provides language on the move, task on time and a medium which can relate to the real life concerns of the target learners. It also increases motivation and self esteem with the novelty of using technology. Moreover, the communication over a distance provides the privacy needed for an adult learner whose self esteem is very fragile. SMS also allows for breaking up the learning task into small chunks leading to easy access of material for making assumptions about language structure. It provides opportunity for self learning through feedback.

The mobile phones used by target learners in this study are low-end mobile phones. The language input was sent through SMS which is the cheapest mode of communication in India.   Learners on the move find suitable time for learning to happen. As one of them said ,"And same time we gets (sic) the thinking capacity in this SMS program." Yes thinking in English!

Objectives of the study

1. To explore SMS as a tool for enhancing the English language proficiency of teachers
2. To explore learner participation in capacity building in distance learning mode for an adult target group who has very little access to learning.

Profile of the target group

For the purposes of this study, the targeted adult learners of English are a group of teachers whose mother tongue is Kannada. They are graduates and have learnt English at the secondary level of schooling. Their higher studies have been completed in small towns where the language of instruction or medium of instruction is Kannada. They teach literacy and numeracy skills to children of a migrant labour population in three non formal schools in Bangalore with the objective of mainstreaming them in State Government Schools. These teachers have no opportunity to speak, read or write English beyond their professional life. Thus the opportunities for practicing English language skills are minimal. The objectives of the target group to learn

English as culled from the needs analysis are: for career enhancement and in order to write monthly reports dealing with school transactions and programmes related to school. They also feel that English language proficiency would enhance their status, market value and confidence.

The researchers selected a target group which has learnt English for a stretch of at least five to six years as a second or third language in semi-urban settings. They had also participated in capacity building workshops in order to enhance their language skills. Yet most of them could only reply to simple questions and write a few sentences. They had not been able to progress beyond this stage despite the desire to do so.

Methodology

Needs analysis was done by administering a questionnaire to forty State Board school teachers in Uttarakhand. A workshop was conducted to collect responses regarding the needs of teachers and teacher support staff in Shorapur, Karnataka. All the participants expressed a need for capacity building in communicative skills with special emphasis on writing. A sample of ten teachers from non formal schools in Bangalore was selected.

The author conducted five workshops where English Language capacity building was done through a whole language approach. On the basis of the response analysis conducted during the workshops it was decided to focus on tense forms in the intervention. The first phase of the SMS program was initiated. The facilitator sent individual messages to the learners through a data card attached to a laptop. This was so that the messages – responses and feedback - could be recorded instantly. The study was done in two phases covering four months. The first half of the first phase conducted in May 2010 was devoted to rapport building. The author sent questions based on the preoccupations, school work, and domestic duties of the participants. The participants responded by writing about their concerns and asking about the author's concerns. The second half of the first phase began with the pretest questions. The phase continued up to June 2010. The syllabus covered tense forms. The questions were both open ended and close ended. Close ended questions included jumbled sentences, fill in the blanks, completion of sentences and expansion of sentences. The topics were contextual and related to the work and home life of the participants. The structure of the message was in the form of real communication and the participants answered with authenticity. A response analysis of the thirty eight messages of each participant was conducted and the syllabus for the next phase of the intervention was chalked out.

The second phase of the programme was conducted from 1st November to 30th December 2010. The post test was conducted at the end of December.

This phase dealt with the helping verb 'do'; 'be' in the continuous tenses and 'have' in the perfect tenses. The author sent messages containing examples of contextual and everyday usage of the target structure followed by a question. For example the participants were told to think of questions to interview a new teacher by asking about her likes and dislikes, subjects studied and classes taught. The participants were motivated to use the target structure in affirmative sentences, negative sentences and questions. The participants soon lost the fear of making mistakes and responded with enthusiasm. The post test was conducted in the last week of December 2010. The pretest and post test were part of the SMS questions and were disguised as a usual question.

A quantitative analysis of the responses of the participants and a qualitative study of their perception was done through a questionnaire to gain inputs on learner perception on the value of the intervention.
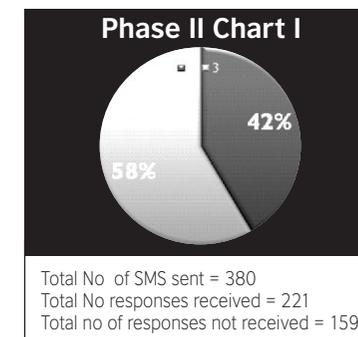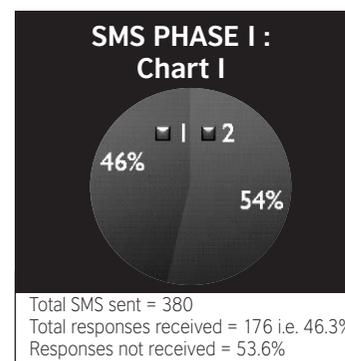
Sample Massages

PRAKASH

Date   : 2010-06-28 19:14:48 Number :xxxxxxxxxx

Message   : Ask me a question about what I am doing just now.

Response : Where are you going?

Date   : 2010-06-28 21:07:10 Number :xxxxxxxxxx

Message   : Why have we used am/ are in the above sentences?

Content   : We use this form in present continuous tense (is+V+ing) and was+V+ing- this was in past continuous tense. Is it correct?

Date   : 2010-11-08 22:34:46 Number :xxxxxxxxxx

Message   : Do you find the SMS English Programme useful?

Response : Dear madam, It is very usefull to us. When you sent something to me, then we try to reply. That time we think in english and search for some grammer points.

Date   : 2011-01-09 14:20:20   Priority: Normal

Number   : xxxxxxxxx

Message   : Imagine that someone is sick. Ask the person what he has taken in the past one hour. E.g. Have you eaten your food?

Date   : 2011-01-09 14:20:23   Priority: Normal

Number   : xxxxxxxxxxx

Response : Are you visited to hospital?

Date   : 2011-01-09 14:26:22   Priority: Normal

Number   : xxxxxxxxxxx

Message   : Now write two sentences about what your students have already learnt, studied and what they haven't learnt as yet.

Response : Have you learnt reading English

Analysis

Chart 1 comprises an analysis of the number of responses across the two episodes of two months of intervention each conducted in two phases separated by a period of four months. The objective of this analysis was to find out whether there was an increase in the number of responses of the participants over the period of the two phases of the intervention. The chart shows a twelve percent increase in the number of responses of the participants. Although this is not a significant increase it is worth noting that the participants' interest in the program was sustained and increased as time passed.

Chart I – Quantum of Responses

SMS PHASE I : Chart I

Total SMS sent = 380
Total responses received = 176 i.e. 46.3%
Responses not received = 53.6%

Phase II Chart I

Total No of SMS sent = 380
Total No responses received = 221
Total no of responses not received = 159

SMS Phase I
1: Responses received = 176 (46.3)
2: Responses not received = 204 (53.6%)
Total SMS sent = 380

SMS Phase II
1: Responses received = 221 (58%)
2: Responses not received = 159 (42%)
Total SMS sent = 380

Chart 2 analyses the number of correct responses. The objective of this analysis was to ascertain whether the number of correct responses increased over a period of time. In the second phase the correct responses increased by ten percent. This indicated that the participants gained a starting level of mastery over the content.

Chart 3 deals with an analysis of pretest and post test responses and it shows that the post test showed an increase of six percent in the correct responses. In both phases the total no of SMS sent were 380.There was an increase of 12 percent in the responses received in the 2nd phase

Chart 2 – Correct Responses

- ⊟ Correct 61%
- ☐ Wrong 23%
- ⋈ Party Correct 16%

- ⊟ Correct 71%
- ☐ Wrong 16%
- ⋈ Party Correct 13%
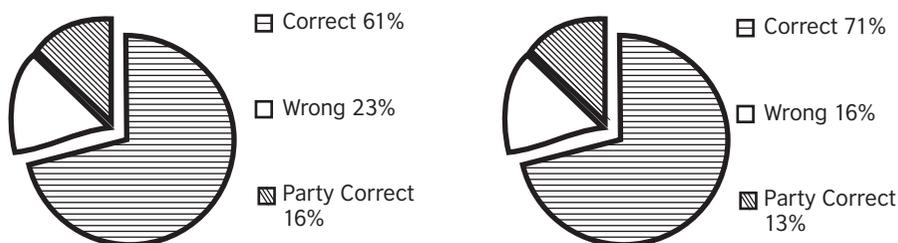
SMS Phase I
1: Correct answers = 107 (61%)
2: Wrong answers = 41 (23%)
3: Partially correct answers = 28 (16%)
Total responses received = 176

SMS Phase II
1: Correct answers = 159 (71%)
2: Wrong answers = 34 (16%)
3: Partially correct answers = 28 (13%)
Total responses received = 22

In the Second Phase the correct answers increased by 10%. The total number of wrong answers decreased by 7% and the total number of partially correct answers also decreased by 3 percent.

Chart 3 – Pre-test/ Post-test Comparison

- ☐ Pre-test 46%
- ☐ Post-test 54%

- ☐ Pre-test 47%
- ☐ Post-test 53%
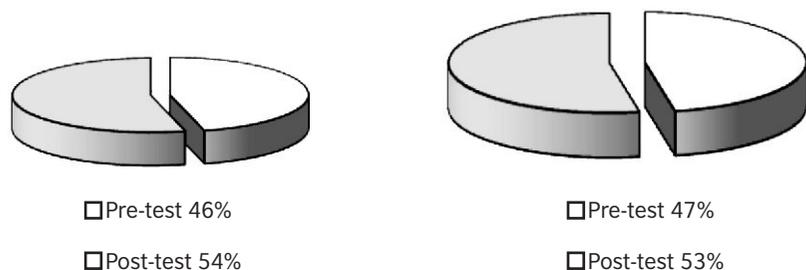
Comparison of Responses Received

Comparison of Correct Responses

There was an increase of 10 in the number of responses to the Pre Test and Post Test. There was an increase of 6% in the number of correct responses between the pretest and the post test.

Participants' Perception of the Effectiveness of the Programme

A questionnaire was administered to judge the result of the SMS program as viewed by the participants. The participants were asked to rate their progress after the SMS program on a five point scale. The scale range was from 'agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The questionnaire was administered to 7 participants. They were also asked to answer questions related to their feelings about the program. The participants perceived the program as having added value to their learning and self-concept. They thought of various ways of learning English by themselves to keep their engagement with the language alive. They said that they had more confidence and felt more comfortable and confident while using English in communication with team leaders.

Problems envisaged

1. In the present study the target language was dealt with only in terms of written language. Speaking skills were not dealt with.

2. SMS is a communicative tool which can be leveraged for learning but it has limited capacity and cannot hold much data.

3. SMS cannot be a stand-alone tool for learning English. It will need a follow up face to face session to complete the learning continuum.

4. SMS can accommodate only 160 characters (in the tool used). It limits the possibilities of data type.

5. Continuous and habitual texting can lead to fatigue and pain in wrist joints.

Glossary

M Learning:Any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile

Whole Language Approach :'Whole Language' describes a literacy philosophy which emphasizes that children should focus on meaning and strategy instruction. Whole Language practitioners teach to develop knowledge of language including the grapho-phonic, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of language. Within a Whole Language perspective, language is treated as a complete meaning-making system, the parts of which function in relational ways. (Source: Wikipedia)

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The Challenge of Being an 'Expert': Ten Effective Training Strategies

Padmini Boruah

Abstract

A recurrent challenge facing teacher educators is bridging the gap between theory and practice. Trainees are usually sensitive to the mode in which theory is 'packaged'. Having faced such a challenge, I have made some strategies my personal 'mantra' for successful training. Among them are

1. understanding my own stance: am I a theorist or a practitioner?

2. putting myself in the trainee's shoes: do I understand their expectations?

3. using experiential pedagogy to demonstrate theory

By making such strategies inform my own training practice, I have found them invaluable in helping me introspect on what works effectively in the training room.

Theory in ELT training room & attitudes to 'Expert' interventions

ELT teacher education courses comprise two components: (ii) 'theory', which includes principles of language teaching and learning, and (ii) 'practical', pertaining to pedagogy and classroom management. The theoretical component encompasses conceptual knowledge, while the practical component deals with the application of this knowledge to classroom contexts.

In spirit, these two components encapsulate the essence of teacher training. The dynamics of the actual classroom are, however, far more complex and fragile. Teacher educators are sometimes thrown off guard by trainees' complacency or antagonism towards new knowledge. This insecurity may be triggered by trainers' insensitivity towards teachers' needs, and may stem from 'outsider' perspectives borrowed from centrally designed course books. Issues such as the incompatibility between recommended course books and low proficiency learner groups or the lopsided effects of using readymade 'communicative' approaches in under resourced classrooms are largely left unaddressed in teacher education courses, and transforming the training classroom into a space for meaningful dialogue inevitably becomes a challenge for trainers.

Trainer preparedness: Effective strategies

A strategy that can address trainer insecurity involves making trainees reflect on trainers' and their expectations from each other. The strategy is useful in sensitizing trainees to alternative perspectives on effective teaching. In my encounters with varied groups of trainees (mostly pre- and in- service teachers teaching at various levels) and fellow trainers, I have often used this reflective question as an ice-breaker. The most common answers that emerge from this exercise are:

Trainers' expectations from trainees

- A reasonable proficiency in English
- Some conceptual knowledge
- Willingness to accept
  o and critique change
  o an 'outsider'/expert version with an open mind
  o trainers' inability to provide solutions to all problems
  o that new knowledge/pedagogies can be sustained

Trainees' expectations from trainers

- Conceptual knowledge
- Teaching experience
- Respect for trainees' own experience
- Allowance for trainees' inadequate theoretical knowledge
- Respect for everyday classroom routines and curricular demands
- Support in implementing new pedagogical procedures

Another strategy uses introspection on personal learning styles as a base for helping trainees develop an open mind towards 'other' beliefs, techniques and methodologies. Using a questionnaire such as the one in Appendix 1, the trainer can help trainees introspect on their own methodologies, which would allow them to view the trainer's intervention as non-threatening – an attitude that is crucial in convincing trainees to try out experiential pedagogies in their own classrooms.

Demonstration of experiential learning: Communicative activities for language development

A good illustration of experiential learning techniques is an activity like 'Cave Rescue' that focuses on practising communicative competence. In this activity trainees, in groups of five or six, decide in what order they will rescue some people trapped in a cave. This activity usually finds participants passionately involved in arguments and debate about who should be rescued

first. During feedback, the trainees are made to reflect on their own interactions during the activity, so that the following learning points emerge:

- Focus on meaning rather than form
- Experiential learning: practising language in authentic situations
- Communication: interactive and spontaneous
- Integration of language skills
- Learner centredness
- Focus on fluency

Such strategies illustrate how theoretical constructs (e.g. constructive pedagogy or experiential learning) can be presented in formats that demonstrate rather than suggest or advise what constitutes effective learning, teaching and training. They also give trainees a methodology that can be replicated in actual classroom contexts. In short, such an approach answers trainees' questions on how to use communicative methodologies as effectively as what models to follow.

Another illustration is a strategy to teach Reading. Here, trainees are first made to compare two methodological models of teaching Reading.

Teaching Reading – I	Teaching Reading – II
1. Definition	1. Elicitation: kinds of material we read
2. List of sub skills	2. Categorization into purpose/speed of reading
3. Definitions of sub skill	3. Re-categorization according to psycholinguistics strategies used (e.g. read quickly to look for specific information/ get an overall idea)
4. Some illustrative examples in different contexts	4. Demonstration & illustration through actual classroom texts
5. Instructions to teach these in individual settings	5. Revisiting categorizations in context with labels (scanning / skimming / inferring)

The first model presents a deductive methodology moving from theory to practice, while the second showcases an inductive process using experiential learning techniques. By presenting two models, the trainer encourages the trainees to critique each model, and elicits from them the efficacy of the second model. The trainer then illustrates this with a lesson from an English

textbook. A good example of this is a lesson like 'Ali Goes to Office', which describes an episode in the life of Ali, a young man, working in an office. Ali wakes up late one day, hurries through his morning rituals and finally reaches office five minutes late, only to discover that it is a Saturday - a holiday! The trainer begins with a pre-reading question to develop curiosity and a motivation to read: Ali goes to office in the morning, but immediately comes back home and goes off to sleep. Why do you think he does that? Comprehension exercises follow, each demonstrating a particular sub skill of Reading (skimming, scanning, guessing meaning from the context etc). The class ends with a humorous post reading activity: trainees are made to write three things they do when they think they are going to be late for school.

Strategies revisited

The methodology used for the activities helps trainees see for themselves - without the trainer sermonizing, theorizing or lecturing – how these pedagogical practices can be used effectively in their own classrooms. In short, strategies that are based on practical demonstration and draw on trainees' own experience and knowledge, allow successful transfer of training. Some of the most effective strategies illustrated here may be summed up as:

1. Knowing oneself / reflecting on one's perspective: as a trainer, am I more comfortable with discussing theory or demonstrating practice?
2. Putting oneself in the trainee's shoes: gauging expectations, misgivings, inadequacies
3. Using a bottom up approach: moving from available knowledge to new knowledge through experiential learning
4. Eliciting and drawing on trainee's perspectives during task feedback
5. Methodology: Elicitation, illustration, demonstration & consolidation
6. Choosing appropriate training materials: materials for general awareness & materials based on curricular course books
7. Managing adults effectively by acknowledging peer perspectives
8. Ensuring two-way feedback to encourage a healthy critique
9. Including a micro teaching component with peer feedback to anticipate problems and modify strategies
10. Consolidation: what new things have been learnt that can be replicated in one's own context?

To sum up, the teacher training classroom can become a site for meaningful interaction if trainers evolve strategies that deconstruct theories and demonstrate pedagogies that have relevance in trainee's own contexts.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire on teaching styles

1	How do I prefer to be addressed by trainee teachers (TTs)?	Formally (Sir/Madam)	By my first name (Ayesha / Sanjeev)	It doesn't matter; TTs should just find me approachable.
2	How important is it for TTs to know theories of language teaching and learning?	Very important; without theory practice cannot change	Somewhat important; theory can confirm concepts obtained from experience	Not very important; there have been successful teachers who have not read any books on theory
3	When should theoretical concepts be introduced to TTs?	At the beginning of the session	At the end of the session	Sometime during the session
4	Which type of TTs impresses me most?	TTs who are well read but have not had much experience yet	TTs who have practical skills but not muchtheory	TTs who are somewhat familiar with concepts and willing to apply them in practice
5	When I explain a concept	I first give a definition and then an example	I illustrate from my own experience	I elicit illustrations from TTs' experiences
6	In a training session	I try to fit in all theoretical concepts to give TTs good grounding	I take a few concepts & explain them well with illustrations	I first engage the TTs in tasks, then use these to illustrate concepts
7	When I'm training TTs,	I keep asking them whether they have understood / followed me	I do not like to be interrupted, so I tell them I'll clarify later	I make them work on the tasks first, and illustrate the concepts during task feedback

8	At the end of my session	I leave them with their thoughts, as I think theoretical concepts need time to be assimilated	If TTs have not understood everything, I promise to handle their problems later	I like to summarize by listing the concepts discussed
9	I take feedback on my session	by asking TTs whether they enjoyed the session, which they usually do	I do not say anything - I'm not comfortable with comments about my own pedagogy	by leaving aside some time to clarify whatever TTs have not understood
10	I handle TTs' teaching problems	by discouraging them from	by being sympathetic; it is	by encouraging to work out strategies

Teacher Filming Project: Tamil Nadu, India

Philip Clegg and Lesley Dick

Abstract

This paper provides an overview to a teacher filming project involving the British Council, the Government of Tamil Nadu's Sarva Shiksha Abhyian (SSA) and Unicef. It covers the background to the project, the teacher selection process followed, filming logistics and editing, how the accompanying teacher training materials were conceived and piloted and the learning points with future recommendations.

Introduction

How do you create a real and lasting impact and affect change when faced with seemingly insurmountable numbers of school children and teachers who all want your help? This was one of the fundamental questions we had to answer in 2007 when we started Project English out of the British Council, Chennai.

Education in India: Statistics
China has 14% of the world's 5 to 9 year old children. India has 21%
Number of schools: India – 1.2 million
Number of children: primary schools in India – 188 million
Number of school teachers: India – 6 million
Additional number of primary teachers needed by 2020 – 3 million
Population of Tamil Nadu (TN) - 68 million
Size of TN in sq. km – 130,000
Number of schools: TN - 50,000
Number of children: TN primary schools – 8 million
Number of school teachers in TN – ¼ million
76% drop out rate in Bihar from classes 1-8

Table 1: Figures from English Next India (Graddol 2010)

Direct intervention was out of the question, given 188 million* children in primary schools in India, more than 6 million* school teachers and our limited

resources. The only way to reach them all and to help improve the way English is taught in this country was to devise a cascade training model with in-built mechanisms to minimize transmission loss. This meant cutting down the number of layers, or cascades, building in monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure quality is maintained and involving all stakeholders at each stage of the project cycle.

After using a one-layer cascade model in a number of different projects across India, we soon realised that the level of partner involvement and the recognition and utilisation of each one's expertise is key to a project's success. This has been demonstrated nowhere more so than in Tamil Nadu, with a three way partnership between the British Council, the Government of Tamil Nadu's Sarva Shiksha Abhyian (SSA) and Unicef.

Tamil Nadu Intervention

The first of two large scale teacher development programmes started in June 2009 with a primary project aimed at improving the teaching and learning of communicative English to primary school children attending government funded schools.

After conducting a needs analysis and diagnostic assessment of potential participants, the British Council designed and delivered an initial 5 days training programme to meet these objectives:

- to improve teachers' confidence in using more English in the classroom
- to develop teacher's ability to create more opportunities for the students to interact in English with each other in the classroom within the existing curriculum
- to encourage the teachers to use a more child centred and activity based methodology in the classroom

The first 5 days used 'Classroom Language', a British Council global product which aimed to increase the confidence and use of English in the classroom. The second 5 day phase was based on the current Tamil Nadu standard 5 textbook and aimed to give teachers the skills to enable them to devise and deliver activities which encourage learner interaction. The programme methodology combined trainer training and teacher training, it mirrored methodology to be used in the classroom with students, it assumed low technology environments and was linked to Class 5 learning outcomes. British Council trainers first trained 900 state teacher educators who in turn cascade their training to over 60,000 primary level teachers in two phases.

Table 2: Activity Schedule

Working Partnership: British Council, Unicef, SSA Tamil Nadu

Oct 08	Unicef brings together BC and SSA for preliminary discussions
Nov 08	BC conducts needs analysis across Tamil Nadu
Dec 08	BC presents findings to SSA and submits proposal
Mar 09	MoU and Agreement signed between SSA, BC and Unicef
Apr 09	Diagnostic speaking tests to select 240 trainers from 450 teachers
May 09	Course delivery to 900 and cascade to 60,000 phase 1
Dec 09	Course delivery to 900 and cascade to 60,000 phase 2
Jan 10	MoU signed between SSA and BC for filming project
Mar 10	Filming 5 teachers in 4 districts over 12 days
Apr 10	Editing films
July 10	Face to Face and Self Access materials written
Oct 10	Piloting of sample materials in Sri Lanka
Dec 10	Piloting of course in Chennai

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Selection, filming and editing

Following on from the successes of the primary project, the British Council teamed up with Graphic Pictures film company of Chennai and Tamil Nadu SSA for an ambitious filming project around Tamil Nadu to produce 5 films of different model lessons from the standard 5 textbook with the aim of supporting the teachers further by offering follow up training, a refresher course and self access study material around the films to consolidate and reinforce what teachers should have already learnt.

Fifty teachers (10 per district) were invited to apply with an application form and a class 5 lesson plan (from a choice of 7). Fifteen applicants were shortlisted and interviewed by a British Council Senior Training Consultant (STC) via EDUSAT (India's first satellite built exclusively to serve the educational sector). Five teachers were finally selected (in three districts) and the filming contract was put out to tender.

British Council training consultants, a ten man film crew, SSA officials, teachers and standard 5 students were all involved and working together over 12 days in three districts. 2 cameras were needed for each scene and each 40 minute lesson took 2 days to film, as each activity had to often be shot more than once. Conditions were tough (up to 40 degrees and no fans

in some schools), but surprisingly this did not dampen the children's' enthusiasm or present too many challenges for the team.

Figure 1: Standard five class being filmed in Madurai district

A British Council STC then spent 5 days in a film studio overseeing the editing process. Following this, the films were checked by British Council colleagues, presented to the Tamil Nadu government for approval and then sent for final British Council branding and copying.

Materials development

The resulting DVD series was then sent to the materials developer in Sri Lanka. The brief was to develop 30 hours of teacher training materials for a face to face context and 30 hours of materials to be accessed in a self–access mode. The philosophy behind the development of it included the following: it had to input teacher training methodology; it had to engage the teachers with the lessons and materials; it had to assume a low resource context in both modes; it had to raise the awareness of the trainee teachers to techniques and activities in lessons and to analyse techniques and activities in lessons; it had to provide the participants with a record of techniques and activities; it had to provide references to follow up web based reading and to provide detailed training notes for cascades. The last point was very important as the delivery method for the face to face courses was highly likely to involve cascade training.

The final product took the form of booklets. In the face to face delivery mode, the booklets included participant notes and trainer notes for each session; in the self accessible mode the booklets included participant notes and participant answers keys. Although the structure and content of the materials for both modes was similar, certain activity types, for example, ones requiring group work, could not be done in a self access mode and had to be

Figure 2: Materials maps

Face to face mode

Unit	1. Have your Garden!	2. On the Seashore!	3. Who am I?	4. Those colourful days	5. Help! Help!
English 5 course book pages	pages 1–3	pages 12-14	pages 18	pages 19-23	pages 60-63
DVD timing	43 min	24 min	34 min	28 min	54 min
Description of lesson	DVD introduction	DVD introduction	DVD introduction	DVD introduction	DVD introduction
Activity 1	Lesson context	Lesson context	Discussion	Lesson context	Warmers
Activity 2	A Positive learning environment	Presentation of vocabulary	Pre-reading	Classroom materials	Lesson context
Activity 3	Management of activities	Practicing Vocabulary	While reading	Exploiting resources	Exploiting a reading
Activity 4	2 kinds of activities	Grammar presentation	Post reading	Grammar presentation: frequency adverbs	Teaching functions
Activity 5	Management of pupils	LP stages and aims	LP stages and aims	LP stages and aims	LP stages, aims and procedure
Activity 6	Teacher pupil interaction	Classroom procedure	Classroom procedure	Classroom procedure	Classroom procedure
Activity 7	Apply the principles	Get the kids talking and playing games!	Kids can write poems too!	Kids can make things too!	Exploiting stories
Activity 8	Classroom management techniques: summary	More kids games ideas!	Tips for handling poems	Let's exploit our course book	Dictionaries
Activity 9	Feedback Session + Chat with Pupils	Feedback Session	Feedback Session	Feedback Session	Feedback Session
Activity 10	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection
Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment

(Face to face module)

Self Access Mode

Unit	1. Have your Garden!	2. On the Seashore!	3. Who am I?	4. Those colourful days	5. Help! Help!
English 5 course book pages	pages 1–3	pages 12-14	pages 18	pages 19-23	pages 60-63
DVD timing	43 min	24 min	34 min	28 min	54 min
Description of lesson	DVD introduction	DVD introduction	DVD introduction	DVD introduction	DVD introduction
Activity 1	Lesson context	Lesson context	Discussion	Lesson context	Warmers
Activity 2	A Positive learning environment-factors	Techniques for presenting vocabulary	Pre-reading	Coursebook and other resources	Lesson context
Activity 3	Management of activities	Practicing Vocabulary	While reading	Strategies for adapting coursebooks	Exploiting a reading
Activity 4	2 kinds of activities	Grammar presentation	Post reading	Grammar presentation:	Teaching functions
Activity 5	Management of pupils	LP stages and aims	LP stages and aims	LP stages and aims	LP stages, aims and procedure
Activity 6	Teacher pupil interaction	Classroom procedure	Classroom procedure	Classroom procedure	Classroom procedure
Activity 7	Apply the principles	Get the kids talking and playing games!	Kids can write poems too!	Kids can make things too!	The Value of Stories in the Primary Classroom
Activity 8	Classroom management techniques: summary	More kids games ideas!	Poetry in the classroom	Advantages of listen and make activities	Dictionaries
Activity 9	Feedback Session + Chat with Pupils	Feedback Session	Feedback Session	Feedback Session	Feedback Session
Activity 10	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection
Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment

Description of a unit

Each unit starts with a description of the lesson and a background on the school, followed by an interactive activity where the participants examine the context of the lesson. Activities 2, 3 and 4 focus on a methodological point, for example; classroom management, dealing with reading. By this point participants will have watched the whole lesson. Activity 5 then moves into an analysis of the lesson plan and the stages and aims of the stages. Activities 7 and 8 focus on developing one of the methodological points in more detail, taking the participants beyond the lesson itself. Each unit ends with an interview of the teacher discussing their lesson and a reflection by the participant on the unit and finally an assignment. The assignment typically asks the participant to select a technique, activity type or skills focused on in the unit, apply it to a lesson of their own, reflect on it and write it up. The task types require participants to interact with the materials in the lesson. Typical task types include: gap fill; ordering; unscrambling sentences; true/false; prediction; matching.

Pilot

Samples of the materials were trialled in the Dimo Tata teacher training course in Sri Lanka and were well received. The pilot of the complete set of training materials accompanying the DVD series was delivered over one week in December 2010 in Chennai, India. Manisha Dak, training consultant, delivered the pilot course to a group of 30 teachers from across the state. Figure 3 shows Manisha delivering the 'Who Am I?' session which focuses on the use of poetry in the classroom ending with techniques for writing haikus and cinquains. The TV in the background depicts the lesson being taught by Ms Veera Lakshmi at the Municipal Middle School, Padmavathyeuram, Tirupur. Feedback on the pilot was positive and the teachers made some constructive suggestions for improvements. These will be fed into the revision of the materials before they are used with a wider audience. The self access DVD series has still to be piloted. When this presentation was made at the conference, Cambridge University Press expressed an interest in publishing the series.

Conclusion

The materials and DVD are now in circulation. What remains to be done is to pilot the self access materials with trainers and teachers, adapt the materials according to the feedback of the pilot, roll out the final version, distribute it to all Block Resource and Cluster Resource Centres across Tamil Nadu, then evaluate the impact of the materials and replicate this in other state projects across India.

The films have received very positive feedback to date and have generated a lot of interest in the region, and as a result, West Bengal, The National Capital

Region Delhi and Sri Lanka are all going ahead to make their own films for teacher training in partnership with the British Council, based on the model we followed in Tamil Nadu.

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Training English Teachers from Difficult and Rural Contexts in Bangladesh

Fazlur M Rahman & Akhter Jahan

Abstract

This paper presents the design, development and implementation of a British Council Teacher Training Course for teachers working in difficult and rural contexts in Bangladesh. The course was developed under the British Council's English for Teaching: Teaching for English (ETTE) Project. It was evident from the beginning of the project (2008) that this huge group of teachers was the most neglected in terms of appropriate training. This paper shows how their needs have been examined in relation to their unique classroom culture, and met in the materials' design and also considers the training results.

The English for Teaching: Teaching for English (ETTE) project (2008-2011) of the British Council targets teachers of English living in the Central and South Asia and includes countries like Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Iran and Bangladesh. This teacher training project focuses on the development of mainly those teachers who are working in difficult conditions, for example, crowded classrooms with very few resources.

 In Bangladesh there are 366,000 primary teachers teaching 16,001,605 students (Directorate of Primary Education, 2008 cited in BANBEIS). They represent a large number of teachers who have in the past participated in different types of trainings and development activities organized by government and non-government organizations but have not benefited from such trainings.

 As part of the ETTE remit a Teacher Training Course for these primary school teachers has been produced in several phases. So, this paper focuses on all those phases as well as the results achieved by the training including the testing of those students whose teachers have attended the training courses.

The Initial research and ETTE

The research was done in the first phase of ETTE in 2008. Teachers in their classrooms (particularly in rural areas) were being observed at that stage. It was found that the classes were very teacher centered and the students were not very active in their participation. Besides, often the teachers used Bangla/ L1 and not English with their students. Focus group discussion of mainly primary teachers from rural areas was arranged as well to find out

what they considered to be the major challenges they faced in their classrooms and the type of training that they felt they needed. It was found that the language enhancement was a recurring theme and the methodology linked to the National Curriculum (NC) textbooks was also required. Questionnaires were also distributed to teachers asking them to assess their level of English and list the methodological areas in which they were looking for help. A placement test was taken for the sample size of about 500 primary school teachers in order to assess their English. The Oxford Placement Test was used in this purpose using the Common European Framework (CEF). The following table lists the key observations:

Table 1: Language Levels of the Teachers

Optimum Score	Level description	CEFLevel	Percentage
80-89	False Beginner Minimal User	--------------------	24
90-104	Basic Extremely Limited User	A1	40
150-119	Elementary Limited User	A2	27
120-134	Lower Intermediate	B1	9

Teachers who were from primary schools in both rural and difficult areas tended to score lower. It was ensured that teachers were from not only the best schools but also the worst ones. They were the typical teachers. Then, their level of competence in English was linked to the level of English contained within and needed to teach in English Medium from the upper level (Grade 5) of NC textbooks. The results indicated that the majority of teachers had an English level below that required to teach competently from the NC textbooks.

Table 2: Language Levels Linked to National Curriculum (NC) Textbooks

CEF A 1 – 24%	Significantly below the level of English required to teach NC textbooks- primary sector
CEF A 1 – 40%	Below the level of English required to teach the NC textbooks
CEF A 2 – 27%	Minimum level of English required to teach the NC textbooks
CEF B 1 – 9%	Satisfactory level of English required to teach NC textbooks

The Bangladesh ETTE training course

Course Aims

This survey gave us the shaping factors for the course design. The overall aim of the course was formulated, which was to help teachers shift from delivering very teacher centered lessons using mostly Bangla (a traditional approach) to delivering more learner centered lessons in which the students would have plenty of opportunities to practice English and in which the trainees (the teachers) would start using more English in their classrooms to communicate with their students. It was also important that the training was linked to the NC textbooks and what the teachers were expected to do with them.

The three basic phases of ETTE training course development in Bangladesh were:

Phase 1: This phase involved not only gathering information but also deliver training lessons. It was done by using a mix of General English (Headway Elementary) and the British Council Course 'Classroom English'. The material was good but some of it was pitched quite high for the participants. So it was difficult to train without using a lot of Bangla/ L1 and it was not linked to the NC textbooks. Therefore, the necessity for producing new materials was still there.

Phase 2: In this phase, new materials, based on the framework provided by the British Council, were produced and ready for piloting. These materials were to begin integrating language upgrade with methodology linked to the NC textbooks. One main learning point from much of the piloting was that further simplification was considered necessary in order to deliver the course in English medium.

Phase 3: In this phase, the final course, the materials and the course components which are based on what we now call the core course are being developed. Now, the main aims of the core course are to:

- familiarize the teachers with and give them practice in the techniques that facilitate a communicative approach to the teaching of English in the context of a typical developing country classroom .

- improve the teachers' own language and English language communicative competencies, with a specific focus on English as a classroom language.

So, it is a blend of methodology and language upgrade. There is usually no explicit reference and no grammar explanation of the language being taught and most of the language dealt with can be termed "Classroom Language or English".

As a result of the piloting the final course has had further simplifications of task and language compared to Phase 2 so that the chances of delivering the course in English medium are maximized. There is also an attempt to introduce structured progression of language. For example, unit 2 of the training course for teachers deals with present simple 3rd person and unit 6 focuses on the past simple. There is also an attempt to structure the methodology and approaches. So, unit 2 deals with simple teacher responses to relatively simple questions which will help build up a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom. Whereas, unit 6 starts looking at and analyzing the various interactions in class between students and their teachers and helps the teachers become aware of more learner centered approaches. Thus, the teaching approach and the concepts underlying the teaching process become relatively more difficult as the course progresses.

Moreover, the final course also included producing audio recordings and the audio scripts due to a fact. It was identified that teachers' listening skills needed addressing. 12 local teachers and trainers contributed to making the recordings so that the participants got exposure to a local variety of English. While preparing the materials for the training course book, the illustrations were also taken into account in order to give the course a local, South Asian flavor and to present the teachers and students with experiences typically found in these contexts. They also act as pedagogical tools. For example, in the first unit it says in English "you will now work in small groups- one group member will role play the teacher and the other participants will role play students". This might be a new concept or type of task for many teachers. So, this micro teaching situation is illustrated in the book. In this way, the visual reference has made it easier for the participants to understand and helped the trainers to rely less on using translation into L1.

Trainer training

As the course was being developed, an increasingly important concern has been the capacity of the project to train trainers and enable other teacher trainers (other than the core team) to deliver the course. This has led to the development of comprehensive Trainers Notes. The Trainers Notes are then used with a training course/ trainer's handbook to form the backbone of teachers training. The trainers in training are inducted into the training program by:

1. Experimenting the course first hand as participants.

2. Reflecting on the course (using the trainer's handbook).

3. Preparing to deliver the course using the Trainers Notes.

4. Delivering the course in a micro training context observed by Trainer Trainers, who in turn give feedback on the trainers' performance.

The final training package consists of the components which enable the following course combinations to be delivered:

1. Standard 5 day training

2. One day or half day workshops focusing on:
   - Giving instructions (taken from the core course)
   - Modern approaches to teaching and Classroom management (taken from the core course)
   - Pronunciation (additional unit)
   - Error Correcting students (additional unit)

3. 5 day Trainer Training

On the basis of feedback a booklet of materials for secondary school teachers has also been created enabling the course to be delivered to lower level Secondary School Teachers.

Impact of the course

In the government report Comprehensive Primary Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development: A Framework for Reform (2009) Richard Kraft and the local consultants have recommended in the executive summary that the training packages at the pre service and CPD levels must utilize the recently developed and newly piloted materials from English for Teaching: Teaching for English since the training materials produced by the government seemed to them didactic, inactive, not child friendly and theoretical.

Partially, as a result of this report, a huge government primary project Primary Education Development Project (PEDP) 2, which is at the heart of all education reform within the primary sector, wanted the ETTE team to pilot its training course.

As part of the piloting they wanted the ETTE team also to test the students' performance before their teachers took the training course and after the teachers took the training course. They were actually looking for evidence of improvement in the students. The results from the tests are summarized below.

Figure 1: PEDP 2 Piloting – Testing of Students

Pre-training 33.67%

Posttraining 49.49%
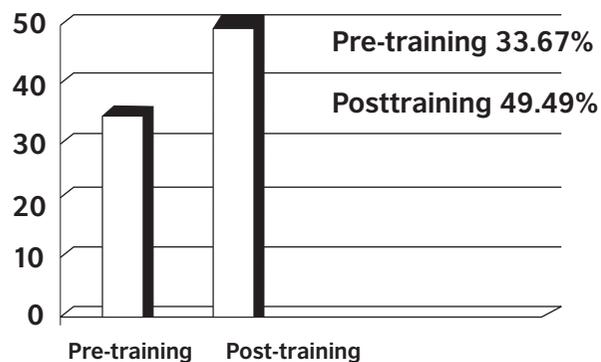
Figure 2: PEDP 2 Piloting- Testing of Students (Grades)
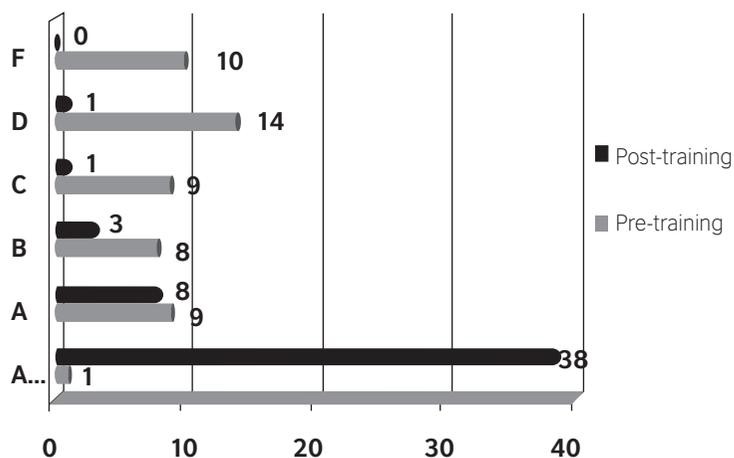
Both of the figures show that the students made significant improvement after their teachers had taken part in ETTE training.

Now, on the basis of the evidence of feedback from teachers and test results, a contract has been signed with the PEDP2 authorities to conduct 12 batches of trainer training to the Upozila Resource Center (URC) trainers. This will involve a cascade model wherein some core trainers will train the URC trainers who in turn will then train the local primary teachers using ETTE course. These URC Trainers are assistant teachers and head teachers who participate in 5 days INSET training every year to subject based specialists.

The course they are using at the moment to do this is too difficult for the vast majority of teachers and is conducted in Bangla/L1 medium. So it has very little positive effect on classroom performance of teachers and students.

In conclusion, it can be said that ETTE has done something unique in Bangladeshi teacher training and development sector since it has opted to find out what kind of effect the teacher training course have on the students who are the ultimate beneficiaries. The findings show that ETTE has been successful in creating a great impact on student's performance. Besides, it has been able to help the primary teachers not only in developing their teaching skills but also in raising their level of confidence as users of English. Therefore, ETTE training has facilitated the teaching and learning of English in the rural and remote areas in Bangladesh.

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Innovation in English Language Education: An Implementation Study

Ravinarayan Chakrakodi

Abstract

The article aims to discuss the degree of implementation of the recent innovation in Karnataka. The aspects of innovation focused are the introduction of English from grade I in primary schools and the decision to design and implement a new language syllabus. The processes of designing the syllabus, training teachers and implementing the innovation in the classroom are discussed. A few factors affecting the innovation are analysed and a few suggestions for the potential success of the innovation are made in this article. The difficulties involved in adopting the innovation that are caused by the lack of teachers' language competence and also by the lack of availability of teaching materials are highlighted.

Introduction

The starting age for the study of English as a compulsory subject in primary education has been lowered in many states across India. Karnataka, a southern state in India, followed suit to introduce English from grade I (age: 6 years) in primary schools from the academic year 2007-2008. Consequent to the decision of the government, there was a need to develop a new syllabus and introduce a new textbook for teaching English from grade I. The process of implementing the decision, designing the syllabus and preparing the textbook are discussed here to show the complexity of an educational innovation.

Innovation: Curriculum design, materials production and teacher empowerment

Karnataka decided to introduce English from early stages of school education in order to empower children from low socio-economic groups and help them achieve social and economic mobility. Before introducing English from grade I, the government conducted a state-wide survey to find out the opinions of parents, teachers and students on teaching English to young learners. The study revealed that there was a strong desire among the public to start English language education from grade I rather than grade V as was the case previously.

Accordingly, the government promulgated a legislation to introduce English as a compulsory language from grade I in all the primary schools from the year 2007-08. Thus, all state schools introduced the study of English at four levels: grade I, grade II, grade III and grade IV.

Consequently, there was a need to develop course materials for dissemination among the users. The responsibility of designing the new syllabus and writing the textbooks was entrusted to the Regional Institute of English South India (RIESI), a premier teacher training institute. The textbook committee was led by Dr N S Prabhu and consisted of mainly trainers from the RIESI and from other training institutes and a few teachers. The general objectives of the initiative were:

1. To provide exposure to English language so as to develop in the learner the interest required to acquire the target language.

2. To develop the ability to communicate using the target language in an environment that requires its use.

3. To develop the basic language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing over the four years.

4. To facilitate the acquisition of English in terms of a broad level of vocabulary (say 250 - 1000) items over the four years of formal learning and also a set of few language structures/ functions.

(The Karnataka Textbook Society, 2007: 4)

It was decided to prepare a Student's Activity Book and a separate Teacher's Resource Book for each grade. I will, henceforth, focus on the process of syllabus design and textbook preparation for grade I.

The syllabus for grade I as given in the Teacher's Resource Book contains five main segments: stories, rhymes and songs, Total Physical Response (TPR) activities, dialogues and games. The syllabus mandates the teacher to conduct the first three activities in the given order in a 40-minute lesson as below:

- story narration 10 - 15 minutes,

- rhymes and songs 3 - 5 minutes,

- TPR activities 10 - 15 minutes

The syllabus also suggests that activities four and five i.e. dialogue practice and language games are optional and may be conducted at least once in fifteen days to ensure more exposure to language. The story segment is the core part of the syllabus. It is a mix of western and eastern classic children's stories like The Pied Piper, Rip Van Winkle and Red Riding Hood as well as Panchatantra and Birbal stories.

Teachers are expected to 'tell the story as naturally as possible, without being too self-conscious or formal or different' (The Karnataka Textbook Society, 2007: 11). Children are expected to look at the picture given in the Student's

Activity Book (My Book of Pictures). There are also activities such as colouring, sketching, sequencing pictures, etc. for children to do after the completion of the story. The Teacher's Resource Book consists of the stories, the rhymes and songs, dialogues, games and a list of TPR activities to be used in the classroom. The Resource Book gives directions on using the different components that teachers need to read and follow.

We know that teacher training and support plays an important role in implementing an innovation, influencing teachers' understanding and their classroom practice. The Directorate of State Educational Research and Training (DSERT) conducted six-day in-service training programmes for about 640 Key Resource Persons (KRPs) at the RIESI to familiarise them with the new syllabus and the textbook. Trainers from the RIESI, who were part of the textbook committee, were involved in this training programme. However, as the textbooks were not printed by then, the training went off without the books.

The 6-day face-to-face KRP training was followed by a series of 4-day teleconferencing programmes and 2-day face-to-face training for about 40,200 practising teachers. While trainers from the RIESI worked on the teleconferencing programme, the KRPs were involved in the face-to-face programme. The training mainly focussed on the syllabus and the textbook, explaining different aspects of the new syllabus and textbook and demonstrating a few techniques of storytelling, ways of reciting rhymes and practising dialogues. However, as textbooks were not available to teachers at the time of the training programme, they struggled to come to grips with the new syllabus.

In-service training was also provided during the implementation process. These were mostly teleconferencing programmes with KRPs as trainers. The content of these trainings was much the same as that of the earlier training programmes. In spite of systematic, continuing and 'effective' teacher education, the innovation was not implemented completely. The feedback to the Department of Education suggested that the story segment in the syllabus was abandoned in many schools. Many teachers were still teaching in the old way. For example, letters of alphabet were taught and memorisation of spellings was encouraged.

Nevertheless, the government policy of introducing English as a compulsory language has succeeded to a large extent at the macro level as English is now taught in all the primary schools from grade 1. Still, at the micro-level, there are a number of problems and difficulties associated with the innovation. The next section examines these issues and presents an account of the teacher's reactions to the new curriculum.

The implementation study

There is a widespread perception among trainers who have followed up teachers' implementation attempts that the new English language syllabus cum Teacher's Resource Book prepared for grade I is viewed by the majority of teachers as a radical departure from the traditional one. The idea of integrating different segments into a lesson and teaching them in a communicative way, with an emphasis on learner-centred activities, seems to be too far ahead of its time. However, it is heartening to note that the innovation has not been rejected completely by the teachers. Many elements of the new syllabus such as rhymes, TPR activities, language games, etc. are incorporated into the daily teaching of the lesson.

Phase 1

In order to find out the extent of implementation of the new textbook introduced for grade I, I decided to conduct a survey, using written questionnaires. The survey was conducted at the end of the academic year 2008, about 10 months after the implementation of the innovation. The purpose of the study was to understand the difficulties encountered by teachers in using the Teacher's Resource Book. The study was done among 219 teachers from 90 different primary schools located in the suburbs of a city. The teachers had varied teaching experiences but had no experience of teaching English prior to the implementation of the innovation. The following are the teacher's responses to the questions asked:

a) How do you find the Teacher's Resource Book?

It is clear from Figure 1 that many teachers found the Resource Book not so easy, though the survey was conducted in the suburbs of a city where teachers have greater exposure to English.
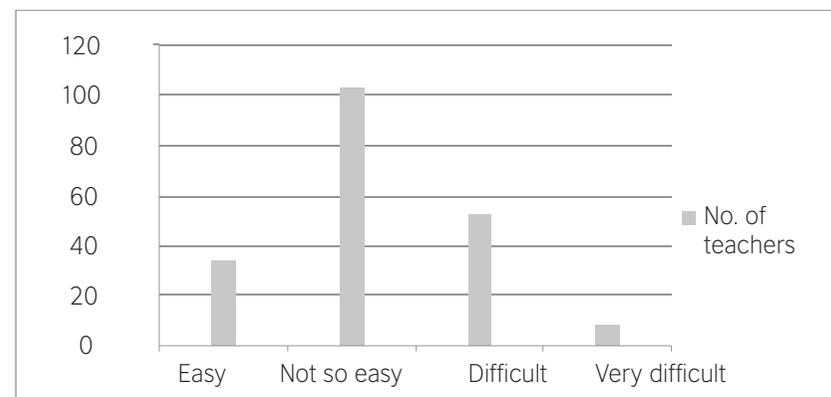

Figure 1: Teachers' views on the Teacher's Resource Book

Further, 86.3% of teachers felt that they found the stories the most difficult segment in the Teacher's Resource Book. Most of them reported that their abilities in speaking and reading in English were not adequate to comprehend the stories given in the Resource Book and narrate them in the class.

b) What should be done to overcome these difficulties?

49.6% of teachers said that the stories should be simplified, 25.1% said that the difficult areas might be deleted and 30.1% of teachers felt that more training/support should be provided.

c) Do you think your own competency in English has improved after introducing English from grade I?

Most teachers were of the opinion that the innovation has helped them improve their own language proficiency only to some extent.

d) Do you use mother tongue while narrating stories?

70.3% of teachers recorded that they used mother tongue to explain the content and help children understand the meanings.

Moreover, majority of teachers stated that they required more support in teaching English to the beginners. They felt that more training programmes and teaching-learning materials were necessary to teach the new textbook. However, majority of teachers said that the overall design of the syllabus and the Teacher's Resource Book were innovative.

As a follow-up of this study, I visited some schools and observed a few classes. The classroom observation revealed that in some schools teachers abandoned the textbook and resorted to their own content for teaching. Teachers used more familiar stories and rhymes rather than the ones given in the Teachers' Resource Book. In addition, teaching the alphabet was a common practice in many schools I visited. This is contrary to the principles of the curriculum set for grade 1. It gives priority to developing the oral language skills before introducing literacy. The introduction and practice of alphabet is delayed until children reach grade III.

The questionnaire survey and classroom observation were followed by an interview with a selected group of teachers. The interview also yielded similar results.

Phase 2

Based on the feedback collected by the teachers, the Teacher's Resource Book and the Student's Activity Book were revised in the year 2009. Some difficult stories were removed and new stories were included in their place. Meanings for some new words in the stories were given in the mother tongue in the Teacher's Resource Book. Unfamiliar dialogues were replaced by familiar and more natural dialogues. The changes made were, by and large, cosmetic in nature and the overall design of the books remained the same.

Against this background, in the second phase, i.e. in early 2011, I conducted a similar study using questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations as described in the first phase. The study revealed that though the Teacher's Resource Book was found easier, the classroom practice did not change much. Teachers were still teaching the letters of alphabet in Grade I, were moving from letters to words to sentences in the following pattern:

This is a ball. That is a cat.
These are balls. Those are cats.

Teachers still had no clarity about the integration of various segments such as stories, dialogues, TPR activities, etc. Apart from this, in some places, teachers who generally do not teach English were found attending the training programmes. During the interviews, some teachers expressed the following views:

'We cannot go on teaching listening and speaking for the whole year'.

'Don't compartmentalise as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Let everything be there and the teachers decide. Some children may like to do writing in class.'

'73% of teachers don't have at least three books of their own'

'Involve teachers in the process of bringing change. Materials production should take place at the district level. Use expert teachers and others from the district'

'Make teachers experts. Change should begin from the classroom'

'Teachers should change their attitudes and beliefs first. They should think that they can do and they have the ability to do.'

It is also necessary to state that some schools had not received the revised books and the teachers were using the old books. It is clear from the above studies that the innovation has not been implemented in the desired way. Some of the factors affecting the successful implementation of the innovation are discussed in the next section.

Factors affecting implementation and suggestions for improvement

One of the major factors that has worked against the successful implementation of the innovation is the teachers' lack of language proficiency. Also, lack of availability of teaching-learning materials such as Teacher's

Resource Book and Student's Activity Book during and even after the training has negatively affected the successful handling of the innovation by the intended users.

A few strategies such as encouraging school-based experimentation and adaptation of the innovation through discussion and placing the responsibility of managing and monitoring the innovation in the hands of schools may help in overcoming the factors that have hindered the implementation of change. Head teachers or school principals could be made personally responsible for the success of the innovation.

Also, providing school-based training programme and on-site support may be a positive move towards managing innovation. Training programmes could focus, not only on the 'what' and 'why' aspects but also on the 'how' aspect of innovation. More importantly, it is crucial to develop teachers' language competence in the first place.

Conclusion

We must bear in mind that innovation is a time-taking phenomenon. It may be too early to draw any conclusions from the small study I have conducted in the selected schools. A large-scale study in subsequent years involving teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders may shed some more light on the innovation in practice. Also, an understanding of the varied issues associated with the innovation diffusion process can help change agents implement the innovation more effectively.

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Incorporating Learning Strategies into YL ESL Curriculum

Kalyani Samantray

Abstract

Learning strategies form an important factor in ESL education. Learning strategies may be defined as steps or actions taken by learners to improve their language skills. One objective of the teacher development workshop discussed here was to make the participants aware of the major text comprehension strategies, for example, lexical, syntactic and contextual, that young learners typically need to work out various levels of meaning in ESL texts. The second objective was to assist the participants in training their learners use these strategies for text comprehension.

Introduction

Children engage with their learning by questioning, exploring, investigating, innovating and interacting, all of which evolve from conscious or unconscious use of a large repertoire of underlying strategies that are termed learning strategies.Learning strategies form an important factor in ESL education when used as actions by learners to improve their language ability (Grass et al 2008). Learning strategy methods that learners use range from techniques for improved memory to better studying or test-taking strategies. Learning strategies determine the approach for achieving the learning objectives and are included in instructional activities, information presentation, learner activities, testing, and follow-through. The strategies are tied to the needs and interests of learners. (Ekwensi, Moranski, & Townsend-Sweet, 2006).

This workshop aimed to make the participants aware of the major text comprehension strategies, for example, lexical, syntactic and contextual, that young learners (YL) typically need to work out various levels of meaning of ESL texts. The second objective was to assist the participants in training their learners in using these strategies for text comprehension and retention.

The workshop

The workshop was structured in a cascade mode: awareness raising, modelling and practice. As reading happens to be the primary focus in the Indian ESL learning, the strategies in the workshop concentrated on this skill, although these strategies have a much wider application when employed to the learning of other language skills.

In raising teacher awareness, the following points are considered:

a. what learning strategies are,

b. how effective readers use these strategies instinctively, and

c. how these strategies are teachable.

Teacher awareness leads to exploring classroom techniques that help learners become sensitive to different text comprehension strategies, and the fact that they draw on many of those without being conscious of such use. They also discover strategies that they may take advantage of. The techniques of learner training can be practiced by teachers through activities to be realistic about strategy training.

Raising awareness

The participants exploit a text to identify the strategies they use for text analysis, and compare their list with the strategy list displayed to them. The procedure assists them to discover their unconscious use of strategies as effective readers, and the fact that more strategies are available to be operational.

Demonstration of strategy employment

A think-aloud technique demonstrates strategy use to the participants. A text and a checklist are utilised for the purpose. A sample text is given below.

Figure 1: A sample text

Using resources

I am studying Italian. I feel very frustrated because I cannot understand the radio broadcasts of the news in Italian. What can I do to improve my listening? What would help me comprehend these broadcasts better? I'll use the learning strategy "Using Resources." I know that the radio station has a website. I can access the website and listen to the news programme more than once. I can also find a transcript of the news programme on the website. Using these resources will help me to improve my understanding of Italian news programs.

The checklist used in the workshop for modeling think-aloud process is also given below.

Figure 2: The checklist

- Used the title for prediction
- Activated background knowledge
- Analysed the text for the main idea
- Located a syntactic problem to check on later
- Identified two new words to remember
- Guessed the meaning of two words using the context
- Kept one word aside to look up in the dictionary later
- Translated two words into my mother tongue
- Noted two verbs and thought about their noun forms
- Asked two participants if they could inform me of other strategies

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Language learning strategies

Oxford (1990, 1996) divides learning strategies into six categories, which framework is used in the workshop. The following list of these categories is displayed and the participants are asked to put the sub-strategies on the checklist under the strategy types showed.

Strategy types

- Memory strategies
- Cognitive strategies
- Metacognitive strategies
- Compensation strategies
- Affective strategies and
- Social strategies

The participants add at least one more of their own strategy under each category. Some of these may be:

- Looking at the text type (genre), and deciding to read it
- Noting down unusual ideas and images
- Noticing the most important words in each sentence as they read
- Glancing through the contents page to locate what sounds interesting

- Analysing how a particular bit of information relates to some other bits that come before and after it
- Lowering anxiety about failures in text comprehension
- Encouraging oneself to carry on with a reading task

Strategy application

It is necessary for the participants to identify the strategies they use as successful readers and consider other strategies available that they can use with the ultimate objective of training learners in conscious use of various strategies. They sit in groups to construct meanings out of different types of texts like book covers, advertisements, poems or news items, referring to one of the five tables on learning strategies. A sample list of strategies tables is given below.

Strategies made explicit	Examples from the sample text	Strategy: can/ can't/ difficult to be trained
Memory Strategies		
I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.		
I use rhymes to remember new English words.		
Cognitive Strategies		
I participated in conversations in English.		
I use the English words I know in different ways.		
I try not to translate word for word.		
Compensation Strategies		
I read English without looking up every new word.		
I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.		
If I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.		
Metacognitive Strategies		
I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.		

I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.		
I have clear goals for improving my English skills.		
Social Strategies		
I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.		
I practice English with other learners.		
I ask for help and seek clarification from English speakers.		
Affective strategies		
What outcome do I hope for?		
What value can I find in the task?		
Why do I want this?		

Each group uses one specific table assigned to them out of the five, first, to become conscious of the sub-strategies they habitually use for text analysis and comprehension, and, second, to notice the other sub-strategies they can access for better text comprehension. They also need to be informed that the particular strategy and the sub-strategies listed under it do not represent a comprehensive list but the more frequently used ones. Each set of sub-strategies is open to appropriate supplementing.

As the participants engage with the texts, they use the think-aloud protocol already demonstrated to articulate their use of particular strategies that they employ at each step. They are encouraged to identify learner problems with reading comprehension and the strategies that can be employed to cope with the difficulties. In the particular strategy table assigned to them, they record samples from the text to illustrate where they use which particular sub-strategy.

After working with the texts and the respective tables, a whole group discussion initiates the participants to talk about their conscious use of strategies, and the possibilities of training their learners to use some functional strategies.

In the workshop I conducted all the groups agreed that certain strategies from the different tables would produce high ESL learning dividends for their learners, such as: the memory strategies of using rhymes to remember new

words and relating words to images, cognitive strategies of using words in different ways and writing notes or letters, compensation strategies of using gestures and skipping unknown words in a reading text, metacognitive strategies of self-monitoring and self-evaluation, affective strategies of assigning worth to a task and measuring one's own progress, and finally, social strategies of asking for repetition and practicing new language with other learners. 'Trying not to translate word for word' and 'making up new words if learners do not know the right ones in English' were the sample strategies considered to be of low importance for the majority of participants.

Each group points out some strategies that may be either difficult or not possible at all to train the learners to use. Some suggestions on how to fruitfully use the low priority or the difficult strategies are offered to the participants. For example, majority of the participants discourage their learners' instinctive use of translation. The value of translation and the procedure for gradual reduction of translation use are suggested as a solution.

Conclusion

The implications of this workshop are as follows:

It is important for teachers to be aware that there are various learning strategies and that learners can be alerted to the strategies they already use and be trained in using some effective strategies to enhance their reading faculty.

To be able to use learning strategies consciously will be a supportive scaffold for ESL learners. With repetitive practice, strategies can transform into unconscious behaviour.

Learner training is important and possible for strategy use.

Maintenance and generalization of strategy use are key factors in strategy training in ESL classes without which there can be a relapse to rote learning and teacher dependence.

One of the most valuable things a teacher can do is to help learners prepare to take the route to lifelong learning. Strategy training is one such avenue.

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Language Training in ESL Teacher Education Programmes in India

Santosh Kumar Mahaptra

Abstract
Research on the importance and centrality of language training in teacher education programmes has shown that language improvement components in such programmes may stimulate overall development among teachers. In the light of this, the present paper looks into the absence of serious efforts to include language training components in ESL teacher education programmes in India. The first part of this paper focuses on the views of some experts about language proficiency of English teachers; the second part critically presents an overview of language teacher education programme in India; and in the last part, a few feasible solutions to the problems are highlighted.

Introduction
Although it is generally agreed by researchers, teacher trainers, curriculum designers and teachers in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) that teacher language proficiency is a tool, using which English teachers can grow professionally; but teacher education programmes in India seems to surprisingly ignore this crucial aspect of professional development. The programme designers do not seem to take notice of the fact that a linguistically incompetent teacher, even if methodologically aware, may feel handicapped while attending to the language problems of his/her learners. Contrarily, knowledge of and about the use of English language may help teachers to achieve a better grip of their professionalism. In addition, a linguistically competent teacher may be more successful than others who lack proficiency in the language, when it comes to correcting errors of students, guiding them to using the language accurately, choosing challenging and interesting teaching material, communicating with students fluently and accurately, giving proper instructions, getting involved in professional activities at a personal level, knowing about current research and practice, etc.

Defining 'language proficiency' for language teachers
Generally, language proficiency is referred to as one's ability to use the four macro skills that is listening, speaking, reading and writing effectively. But a report prepared for National Asian Languages/Studies Strategy for Australian Schools (NALSAS) in 1999 to study the language proficiency of language teachers quotes Bachman and Palmer, who associate language proficiency with six interrelated areas of language knowledge. They include:

organizational knowledge pertaining to the way in which texts are structured; grammatical knowledge including knowledge of vocabulary, syntax and phonology/graphology; textual knowledge, which includes knowledge of cohesion and knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization; pragmatic knowledge, related to the communicative goals of the language user and the context in which the language is being used; functional knowledge including an understanding of ideational, manipulative, heuristic and imaginative functions, as well as sociolinguistic knowledge (Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 68). As the ultimate aim of any language teacher education programme is to prepare teachers for the classes they are required to teach, any such programme may fall well short of being effective, if it does not include components from the areas of language knowledge mentioned above – not only what Chomsky calls linguistic competence, but also communicative competence as used by Hymes. It may be apt to put it as 'competence to impart competence' (Thomas 1987).

Language training for English teachers in teacher education programmes
There is plenty of research evidence to support that language proficiency, an important part of teacher knowledge, is the most essential characteristic of a good language teacher. The language proficiency of English teacher trainees was being taken for granted till some researchers in ELT like Widdowson, Richards, Bolitho, Wright, etc pointed it out that it has not got its due attention in teacher education programmes. However, making language training 'prescriptive' in teacher education programmes may be a debatable issue considering the fact that there are sociocultural and cognitive factors which have varying impacts on the making of a teacher's language abilities across the globe. Thus, it may be logical to decide the required levels of proficiency for a teacher depending on the sociocultural background of students, the amount of exposure to English language they have, the purposes for which they will be required to use the language, etc.

Wright (2003) argues that "proficiency in language use, knowledge about language, and knowledge of teaching methods" are essential to successful language teaching and emphasizes that language awareness can operate under three domains corresponding to the three areas in teacher education – user, analyst and teacher. While the first one involves using language successfully in addition to knowing the rules of use, the second one includes knowing the system of the language, and the last one is all about facilitating language learning. Wright's suggestion is indeed an interesting option since current research in language teacher education has shown a lot of sensitivity towards sociocultural factors, explicit training of and about language and affective factors related to teachers.

English language teacher education in India

The number of educational institutes in the country has been growing at a healthy rate in India since independence, but teacher preparation in the country has not been able to keep pace with it. In fact, teacher education in the country has not had enough attention until recently. It is evident from the fact that it was only in 1995, that is twenty years after its establishment, that National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) got statutory status. There is even less to talk about the education or training for English teachers in the country. In the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2009), hardly anything is mentioned about the education of English teachers. There are, of course, courses like Post-Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English (PGDTE), Post-Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of English (PGCTE) and Bachelor of Education (B. Ed., English) offered by the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), B. Ed. offered by the Regional Institutes of English (RIE), and some in-service programmes organized by British Council for teachers of English. But they are too little if we consider providing adequate training and education to English teachers working in different schools, colleges, institutes and universities in different parts of India. It remains doubtful if an average Indian school teacher knows about Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) or Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA) and can afford paying the fees to get registered in these courses.

Lack of any special policy

It is really surprising that a country like the US, where English is the first language (L1) for majority of people, has a National Council of Teachers of English, whereas in India where English is believed to be contributing to the overall development of the country, there is no special policy for ELT and its practitioners. In a consortium organized in India in May, 2007 by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Mumbai to review the state of ELT, it was pointed out that there was no special English Language Teaching policy at the state level in the country; English was taught by regular teachers and there were no special English teachers in the state-run schools. Though there have been occasional talks about reforming the system (for example "Report of the Curriculum Development Centre in English", 1989), yet not many recommendations have found their way into policies.

Absence of language training

Since there are no separate policies for the education of English language teachers in the country, it may be very necessary to ensure that teachers who are selected to do the job are proficient in English and have the required language awareness to operate effectively in their respective classrooms. Unfortunately, very few pre-service teacher education programmes in India have been designed accordingly. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, 2009 addresses the issue of teachers' language proficiency, which was pointed out as a major concern earlier in the National Curriculum Framework, 2005, and emphasizes that teacher education programmes should give high priority to improving the language proficiency and communication skills of teachers irrespective of the stage specificity and the content area. Though the issue of English teachers was not mentioned, the matter could be even worse in case of English teachers as language proficiency is a basic need for them.

Hiring policies for English teachers

Talking about teacher education programmes for English teachers in India will remain incomplete without having a look at the debatable hiring policies for them in the country. Until recently, in most state-run government schools there were English teachers from all sorts of academic backgrounds. They were only required to have English teaching methodology as one of the elective subjects during their Bachelor of Education course. Their language proficiency never seemed to be a matter of importance and concern. It is obvious from the above fact that language proficiency was never a criterion in their selection. Since the hiring policies in majority of Indian states include employment of teachers with non-humanities background as English teachers regardless of their linguistic abilities, there should be some effort to ensure that the selected teachers are competent enough to handle the challenges in the classroom. At least a standardized test of English language proficiency for candidates aspiring to join B. Ed. to become English teachers could be a part of selection criteria. Such a test may encourage students to improve their language skills before getting into the profession of teaching English. Unfortunately, the efforts in this regard have been far from being satisfactory.

Recent Developments

The disheartening scenario in English teacher education seems to be giving way to progressive changes in teacher education curricula and hiring policies. Recently, state governments like West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Goa have decided to employ trained English graduates and post-graduates as English teachers. This shows that English teachers are finally on the way to get their much-longed status of 'specialists'. But it remains to be seen if there are enough trained English graduates in the other remaining states to prompt a similar step by their respective state governments. It may not take long when we have a government-recognized body to take care of education of English teachers.

Another pleasant surprise came recently in the form of a B. Ed. syllabus proposed by NCTE. The central body has tried to compensate for the lack of proficiency among teachers who teach English with the inclusion of components for language training in the syllabus. It is a very encouraging step considering the long silence on the part of policy makers in this matter.

Solutions: accepting the truth and acting promptly

There are no easy solutions to the problem discussed in the previous sections of this article, since the ability to use the syntax, lexis, phonology, etc of English is not what English teachers should be confined to. Teacher education programmes must help teachers to identify the features of the language that are different from that of their own and lead them to integrate local reality with it while learning and teaching it. If teachers are trained and educated to be able to control their own learning, they may be expected to promote it among their students. Favourable changes in policy may set the stage for infusing such practices into teacher education programmes and make them socially and linguistically responsive. However, changes in policy involve many factors like the political party in power in the centre and the states; the appointment of curriculum designers; the political agenda behind employment of teachers; etc that do not directly come under the purview of ELT. But we may hope that all the states agree to implement NCTE's proposed syllabus and take necessary steps to equip teachers with the required linguistic and communicative competence to teach English at school level.

In addition to the above, introducing language training modules in pre- and in-service teacher training programmes may be a solution to the problem. The modules should contain language items necessary for English teachers. It may be made mandatory for English teachers to complete the prescribed modules to obtain degrees like Certificate in Teaching, Bachelor of Education, Master of Education, etc or receive increments and promotion. However, the onus will still be on teachers to improve their language proficiency in their respective sociocultural context using suitable self-development strategies, which can be taught during formal training programmes.

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Could reading be such fun? - Youth libraries in tribal India

Sathyanarayanan Mundayoor

Abstract

A group of Youth Libraries in the Himalayan tribal state of Arunachal Pradesh have been conducting a number of reading promotion activities in their rural neighbourhood government schools. These activities by the young reader-activists are found to be having a significant impact on the language skills of the learners, besides promoting their creative and critical thinking. The experience throws up some lessons for teachers and teacher education, which are discussed with the lessons and insights from the experiment.

A Network of mini-libraries in the Himalayan Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh has been providing a joyful reading experience to the rural children of the neighbourhood, most of them from the government schools. The two main libraries, open all days a week, one in the town of Tezu and the other in Wakro, a tribal village in the district Lohit, have been conducting a variety of activities promoting reading in nearby villages where no public or school libraries exist.

Challenges before Education & English Language Learning in Arunachal Pradesh

Geographical constraints

Arunachal Pradesh, the largest state of the North eastern Himalayan India, with an area of 86,000 sq kms has a population of 11 lakhs. 64% of them are tribals, living in thinly scattered villages. Poor road & telecommunication links and irregular power supply are major hurdles to the region's development, known for its difficult terrain.

Socio-political constraints

Most of Arunachal's 26 major tribal dialects have no script. Hence English is the medium of instruction right from grade 1, though Hindi is the lingua-franca. As the tribal languages find no place in schooling, there is little educational activism among the people. Modern education has taken roots in the state only since 1970s, with the state-run schools catering to the majority of the population. Only the elite and the urban population have access to private schools. Since women and girls shoulder heavy household responsibilities, there is relatively poor learning exposure and large drop-outs among adolescent girls.

Fall in language learning skills

Till 1980s, middle and secondary schools were few and concentrated in major localities. However they provided free hostel facilities and stipend to the tribal students, ensuring them a supportive learning environment. Further, the teachers in these schools were from outside the state, giving the local students a pan-Indian exposure to learning and to English language. Even remote towns had well-stocked state-run libraries, widely used by the educated few, as video and TV had not yet arrived to replace reading.

However, by the turn of the century, the state policies and the Central Govt. sponsored Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) i.e. 'education for all' was introduced. This resulted in large-scale induction of local youths as teachers who were much less qualified or proficient in English than those previously employed. The consequence is that though SSA thus has taken schooling to the remotest corners of Arunachal, in the absence of adequate administration and effective teacher training inputs, it is widely acknowledged that there is a steep fall in educational standards and in the English language skills of senior students. This has also led to a depleted reading environment in tribal homes. There is in fact a visible lack of political commitment to education.

Youth library network

Sensing the urgent need of an intervention, a few voluntary organisations led by Vivekananda Trust book enthusiasts and the Lohit district Administration came together in 2007 to start the VT-AWIC Youth Library Network - a string of mini-libraries. This crystallized with a gift of 6000 books for children and youths from the Omprakash Foundation, USA and the Association of Writers & Illustrators for Children, New Delhi, (AWIC). However, since most youths hardly ever visited any of the libraries, the organisers decided to make the libraries an activity-centre, thus providing visitors with novel experiences.

Reading Promotion Campaign

Recognising that 'if youths do not come to books, books must go to the youth', the network launched a Reading Promotion Campaign targetting the rural schools of the district. The objective was: 'Spread the Joy of Reading', involving young reader-activists from the Tezu & Wakro libraries and a few adult volunteers. Story-telling, story-reading, skits, and recitation of humorous poems, were identified as motivating tools, along with training the target students in these skills. The campaign in 2009 covered 60 schools across 2 districts, right upto Kaho, a village on the border with China. This was an exciting experience for the village students: Reading in English language looked fun! It was their first exposure to a book outside their school texts. The reader-activists also found the campaign an enriching experience. It boosted their morale and won the libraries a lot of goodwill in the district. It was continued in 2010 also.

The campaign targeted primary and middle school students (Grade 1 to 8) because volunteers were from this age group. They used Hindi magazines and English books, narrating them in English, Hindi and the local dialects. Book-contests and mini-book sales supplemented the campaign.

Library Readers at an international conference on Children's Libraries

A team of 12 readers from the 2 libraries participated in the AWIC International conference on children's libraries in New Delhi in Feb 2010, with a 20 minute presentation of their activities, which won them laurels from the delegates. The visit was a great boost for the library network and the young readers who were travelling outside their region for the first time.

Activities of the Reading Campaign

Story-telling: Schools in the state hardly tapped the potential of story-telling as a language development tool until the Tezu Library readers started narrations with theatrical effects. The libraries took the lead in organising several storytelling sessions and contests, making them widely popular.

Skit presentations: Observing that group performances help children to get over their inherent hesitation, the libraries introduced skits (4-5 minutes long mini-plays) involving 4 - 8 readers. The peer group effect led to substantially motivating those who used to earlier shy away. Humorous stories from magazines and books were presented as skits in different languages in many public functions, covering social issues like girls education', environmental degradation, and opium-addiction.

Wakro readers produced a series of skits on little known women achievers like Baby Halder1, Dr. Kamala Sohoni2, and Dr. Usha Mehta3, which were widely applauded. Tezu library's skit from British history on King Arthur highlighted 'respect for women'. These skits helped both readers and audience to better understand social history. They also helped 'discover' many new reader-enthusiasts.

Poetry recitation: The library activists loved reciting rhyming and nonsense poems though they had had little exposure to English poetry. Poems from "Scared Silly!" by M. Brown, "You read to me, I'll read to You" by Mary Ann Hoberman and "If I ran the School" by Prelutsky were particularly popular.

Reading aloud sessions by adults: The Coordinator of the Library Network has been conducting regular reading sessions for various age-groups, often introducing renowned authors like Roald Dahl and Dr Seuss and also Indian writers like Ruskin Bond and Arup Kumar Dutta. From 2008 more adult volunteers have joined hands to contribute to these sessions.

Contribution of adult time by volunteers: The poor reading standards of the students pointed to a lack of exposure to English language even in school. The library readers could receive this abundantly from the beginning through the contribution made by adult volunteers. These volunteers spent long times with the children to enhance their exposure to the written word. Some remarkable adult contributors included Etalo Mega, a tribal youth and college student, Ms. P. Sreedevi, a research scholar from Hyderabad, (who wrote an article on the experience: Sreedevi, 2009), two University students from UK, Alice and Edward Shipseys, and Mrs Nabanita and Mr. Bappu Deshmukh from Pondicherry.

Impact on the reader activists

The young reader-activists have benefited immensely from regular visits to the library and the campaign activities, as acknowledged also by their parents and friends. The notable changes are increase in self-confidence, better speaking skills and stronger personality traits, which can safely be related to their participation in the reading activities and frequent interactions with the guests at the libraries. The Delhi Conference added a cascade effect on other volunteers too.

Impact on language skills

Reading habits: The volunteers have distinctly improved their reading habits. Those just browsing earlier can now read youth magazines and books. Those who earlier read only Hindi magazines now read English books. Their reading speed and vocabulary range have increased too.

Speaking skills: The readers who were not school boarders and who spoke only Hindi have picked up English conversation by their interaction with adult volunteers. The English skit on King Arthur by Tezu readers was an excellent experience.

Creative writing skills: The libraries have been encouraging creative writing by readers on familiar themes, such as childhood experiences of their grandmothers. Displaying an enthusiasm to write and a visible improvement in writing style, many Wakro readers had their articles published in various magazines during 2010-11.

However, these are largely personal and general observations, as no quantitative measurements on Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) etc. could be attempted by the author.

Book reading activities & English language learning

The above experiences clearly point out the beneficial effects of reading activities for a language learner and hence also the language teacher. Since a school class room hardly provides adequate practice of reading skills and exposure to English language, it becomes important for the teachers to realise the diverse opportunities that they may get in real life, as described vividly in Totochan (Kuroyanagi,1984) and Divaswapna (Badheka, 1989)

Interestingly, it appeared that the reader-activists could realise these benefits from library book reading, and that they were in no way a distraction from their school studies. Unfortunately, participation of teachers in this library project was nominal or almost nil. It was strongly felt that effective participation of teachers in the experiment could have greatly multiplied the impact on the learners. This points to the need for creativity in teacher education programmes and specifically for language teachers and those serving rural or marginalised societies. States like Arunachal Pradesh where English is the medium of instruction, need to evolve special strategies to promote teaching reading skills in their schools.

Lessons for teachers

The library experiences demonstrated how a library book, a magazine or a visitor can reinforce and broaden the language levels in a learner, without any conscious and contrived effort. Activities like skits ensure better and faster learning through peer-group interactions and building a joyous environment in the class. This is a valuable lesson for the Indian school teacher, who generally faces large overcrowded classrooms.

Conclusion: Lessons for Future

The youth library activities offered interesting insights into the challenges facing English language teachers, teacher educators, parents and for the state which is responsible for providing equitable learning opportunities to its multilingual and largely rural population, as in India.

At the apex level, it indicates a vital need for a political will to improve educational standards, and academic guidance at the school level

The youth library initiative showed how the educated and urban elite could gladly contribute their expertise for the educational advancement of the less privileged.

Finally, this experiment vividly demonstrated how voluntary action, with the backing of the state, can strengthen and improve learning standards in rural and marginalised societies and bring in the joy of learning into the otherwise mundane life of school students.

Endnotes:

1. Baby Halder – The housemaid of Delhi who has emerged a powerful writer, known for works like A Life Less Ordinary (New Delhi: Penguin Books).

2. Kamala Sohoni – the first lady to enrol in the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, overcoming the stiff conditions laid by its Director, Dr. C.V. Raman.

3. Usha Mehta – The daring lady behind the Secret Congress Radio during the Quit India Movement, 1942

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Learning through Participation in a Research Programme

Susmita Pani

Abstract

This paper presents a study on informant learning undertaken in a teacher training institute for teachers of secondary schools in Orissa. The study proposed to develop the reading strategies of a group of teachers through a strategy training programme. While the focus of the study was on their personal development, the informants related the procedures of the instruction to their own learners. This transfer of training was done without the researcher's conscious efforts. This study indicates that involvement of teachers in research improves their effectiveness as teachers. It proposes that participation in research be made a part of teacher education curriculum.

Practitioners' learning through action research has now been fairly well established. The knowledge developed in the inquiry process is directly relevant to the issues being studied and thus creating a form of knowledge useful to the actor and the point being investigated (Reason 2001).Since action research means making a systematic inquiry into a problem faced by the practitioner, the researcher gains a better insight into the context where the research takes place. Sometimes, the researcher also finds a solution to the problem that originally led to the research. However, questions remain regarding the learning process of the participants in the study. Do they after all gain from being involved in the process of research? Do they directly or indirectly learn from the process in terms of their personal and professional development? This paper proposes to address these issues by presenting a study carried out in a teacher education context.

Setting the scene

The study was carried out at the English Language Teaching Institute (ELTI), Bhubaneswar, Orissa, in eastern India. The ELTI was established in the year 1987 to provide in-service training to high school teachers with a view to improve the quality of English language teaching at the secondary level in the state. One process adopted for this is through providing instruction for Diploma in ELT programmes. The teachers selected for this Diploma course at ELTI are the ones who have been chosen by the Selection Board in Orissa, with a minimum teaching experience of five years at the secondary level. The selected teachers, in addition to a university degree, usually have a degree in teaching. However, they may not necessarily have any training in the teaching

of English since 'ELT Methodology' happens to be an optional subject in the teacher training courses of the state.

Problems

One of the major problems the teachers face in teaching English in this set up is their own lack of adequate proficiency in English. This makes it difficult for the teachers attending the Diploma programme to translate some of the things they learn into practice. Another is their fear of using English. The thought of using English during teaching practice sessions frightens them so much that they often fail to effectively execute what they originally planned to do. Over a period of time, the trainers at the ELTI have understood that the training being given is not particularly effective and that unless some steps are taken to improve the language proficiency of the teachers, the training would be of very limited use.

Reading strategy course

In order to improve the reading proficiency of the teachers, the course component on reading, which was earlier geared towards the 'how' of the instruction of reading, was modified by changing its focus from a methodology course to one of proficiency development. This was done by making the course predominantly strategy focused. The reading strategies as used by the participating teachers before the course started were collected through a questionnaire. Following this, the teacher participants were introduced to a reading strategy instruction course. This course was of thirty hours duration spread over three months. It mainly consisted of reading texts with tasks which had to be completed in pairs or groups. The tasks were designed keeping certain reading strategies in mind. Mental modelling(Duffy, Roehler and Herrmann 1988, Pani 2004) (see the endnote) was a procedure that was sometimes followed here.

Enquiry wrapped around the course component

In order to understand the effects of the programme and how the participants reacted to it, I chose five randomly selected teachers who went through the process of reading and completing reading related tasks and reflected on it. Informal, after class discussion sessions with them were arranged. They also used mental modelling techniques while reading through some texts. Both these exercises were recorded and transcribed which helped me to understand their progress and their attitude to the course, both of which were quite favourable. These discussions were conducted in a mixture of their mother tongue and English. Each of these five teachers also maintained a diary. On my own part, I too kept a diary to record the events in the classroom and thus gained an understanding of the effects of the course and decided on modifications to be made into the process of the course itself.

I would like to present the experience and response of these five participants, covering specifically what they learnt unconsciously, i.e. things that were not consciously focused on within the course. Here I mention only those parts of their comments, which are indicative of change and therefore amount to learning where this course is concerned.

Now and then

I would like to present just three earlier thoughts to highlight the change that I found later in them. One of their earlier comments was "Reading is just reading". Towards the end of the course one of them said, "As teachers we ask our learners to read and then ask them to answer the questions, but that there is so much to reading I never knew. I never knew that to be a successful reader is to apply so many strategies." Another earlier trait noticed in their response to the questionnaire was that they preferred to work alone. Now they appreciated the opportunity of asking questions to others as well as to their own selves, empathizing with others in the group and trying to come to a consensus in the group. They went beyond the course when they said that they thought they would look for opportunities to make their learners work in pairs in their own classes to help them develop these strategies. They had also said earlier that they expected they would be taught a lot of theory on the course. This was because of their experience with the earlier teacher training programmes. But gradually they discovered that they were becoming aware of the 'theory' through the discussions that followed the tasks, both in the group as well as through the plenary discussions. This change did not take place without a struggle, because some of the participants (as was written in their diaries) questioned their ability to understand a text without knowing the accurate meanings of the words. However, by comparing themselves as they were before the course and how they had changed as a result of it, the participants not only showed their readiness to change but their awareness of the change in themselves.

Thinking of their learners

The participants showed improvement in their own reading (as seen through the after class task completion and follow up discussions); an awareness of the reading process and the reading strategies. They were clear about the utility of mental modelling and wanted to use it with their learners. One of them said, "You can show your learners how to read. This is like a demonstration, isn't it?" He had already gone beyond what was being done in the class to applying things to his own classroom situation.

Thus, they discovered the ways to improve their own reading skills. More importantly, they seemed confident that they could help their learners in becoming strategic readers. While doing tasks, they looked at the tasks with teachers' eyes to see if they could use parallel tasks with their learners,

though no such suggestion was made to them. Over the duration of the three month course, they consciously thought about different ways in which they could help their learners.

Lessons learnt

In spite of being dissimilar at the beginning of the course, the attitudinal changes in the participants as a result of being part of the research study were quite marked. It was clear that they had changed and some part of that change could be attributed to the learning that resulted from being part of a research procedure. To begin with, compared to the others in the class they became more open to new ideas and procedures used in the course. They showed a greater urge to learn. These were teachers who left the course with a positive attitude to learning and a belief that they would be able to do something more for their learners. They were also the ones who became less disgruntled with the prevailing unfavourable conditions at their work place. This pointed to their becoming more tolerant with an open attitude that facilitated learning. There was an improvement in their level of awareness as well as increased confidence in their behaviour.

Possible reasons

The changes seen in the five teachers, I assume, resulted from both the course as well as their participation in the research study. Being a part of research made them reflect deeply on their existing practices and compare those with the alternate procedures available. Spending additional time with the tutor/researcher in an informal set up also helped them to clear their personal doubts and fine tune their learning from the course. Mental modelling procedures, which they often engaged in as a part of the study, assisted them in becoming more reflective and metacognitively aware. My own diary notes confirms this change as well.

The teacher participants of the study showed an improvement in their capacity to reflect on their abilities as readers. For instance, they were able to articulate the fact, albeit indirectly, that they were lazy readers who didn't look for clues but preferred to fall back on their background knowledge to interpret the text. This ability to articulate their limitations as readers showed their personal development. This was very different from the observations at the beginning of the course when they were reluctant to talk.

The way ahead

This study showed that getting participants involved in research as informants is one way of improving their motivation which can result in enhanced learning. Such a research plan could be made a part of the curriculum in a teacher education programme.

This study however, leaves some questions unanswered. If they had actually changed in some manner, did this change ultimately percolate down to their learners? Did their learners' ability to read improve as a consequence of their teachers having been a part of the research process? Had the teachers sustained the enthusiasm they had shown during the process of being associated with the research? While the above have not been studied as of now, the study does show evidence of the fact that teachers had changed towards being better teachers by participating in the research process. It can therefore be concluded that getting participants involved in research as informants is one way of improving their motivation which can possibly result in enhanced learning. Teachers' learning can be improved by engaging them as participants in even small scale studies. Such research plan could be made a part of the curriculum in a teacher education programme.

Endnote

Mental modeling is a process where a more capable reader (in class the teacher) models the reading process while trying to solve a problem. This helps the novice reader 'see' how the other solves a problem.

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Use of Appropriate Tools in Village Teacher Professional Development

Tatyana Kolesnikova

Abstract

The study of the needs of Kazakhstani rural teachers questioned during in-service teacher training courses showed that they are attracted by the prospect of learning about the latest developments in methodology. However, they have little opportunity for professional development except full-time courses at a professional development institution. The teachers' associations came up with various responses to this need from a mobile teacher training group to a distant course. The paper gives examples of methodological and technical issues of organizing such kinds of training, and their evaluation for making a comprehensible decision in meeting the needs of such category of teachers.

Introduction

English education has been identified as a priority by the community and the Kazakh Government. The quality of education differs in urban and rural areas. The teacher associations' members believe that the best way to address this problem is to train rural teachers. Rural teachers often have a lower proficiency at speaking English and have less access to resources than urban teachers. One of the objectives of the National Association of Teachers of English in Kazakhstan (NATEK) is to assist rural teachers in developing their skills in teaching, thus allowing them to become better educators and ultimately improve the English of their current and future students. A higher quality education will help lead to a better life by expanding and opening up student minds, creating people who are responsible, community assets. NATEK has used several tools for organizing village teacher professional development depending on the teachers' needs and on the association resources available.

Village project workshops

The Village Project started as an organization of dedicated women educators currently from local English teacher associations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan who travelled in pairs to rural areas and presented workshops on Saturdays for village teachers of English. The main features of the project were as follows:

- Expert teachers of English giving workshops for rural English teachers

- A grass roots project of teachers helping teachers
- Small costs and big rewards
- Transforming the lives of teacher trainers
- Providing expert teacher-trainers for teachers of English in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.
- New reflective teaching practices raised the quality of teaching English, thus impacting the education of thousands of students in Central Asia.

To make the project sustainable, local associations looked into its own ways to raise rural teachers' professional level. The quality of education according to test results differed in urban and rural areas, so the best way to address this problem was to train rural teachers. The Mobile Teacher Training Group project in East Kazakhstan equipped rural English teachers with a booklet containing information on teaching methodologies and classroom activities. Further, the project provided rural teachers with local seminars that informed them how to implement the new information into the classroom effectively. These actions, providing a resource booklet and training, built local capacity and skills, decreasing the inequality of English education between rural and urban areas of the East Kazakhstan region. The project was supported by the East Kazakhstan Oblast Department of Education. Presentations were made on selected topics in a manner which involved the teachers to better understand each activity and therefore be more likely to use it in their classroom. Also, time was devoted to the booklets use allowing the teachers to become familiar with the contents.

A survey conducted directly after the seminars focused on how effective the seminar was and how to improve it. The post-seminar survey was carried out three months after the seminars. It looked into how teachers implemented the seminar material, results, effectiveness of the booklet, and their feelings about the seminar and suggestions for future seminars.

Video-based professional development courses

"Shaping the Way We Teach English", a video-based professional development course by Professor Leslie Opp Beckman (University of Oregon), was introduced in Kazakhstan by Saule Abdygapparova, NATEK President, in 2009. She organised an introductory training of teacher trainers from local associations, who then disseminated the course over Kazakhstan. The course helped to build an academic foundation in language teaching and to improve language teaching classroom practices.

The novelty of the course was involvement of participants in organising and facilitating training sessions. Instead of passive attendance of the course, they took turns in delivering workshops. As organizers and facilitators, they improved their own presentation, leadership and English speaking skills. They

made their choices as to the amount of the material to be used and the preferred way of presenting it. They also learned how to observe their peers' sessions for professional development purpose and to give feedback. The participants stated that some of the course materials showed examples of quite a different learning context. However they agreed that the course materials can be adapted to their teaching context.

A very important part of the course was the use of additional resources. The participants went through the pre-viewing activities, readings, and the supporting resources in the manual before they viewed the video. The course provided for reflective teaching. While working at the material teachers looked for answers to the following questions:

- What new ideas does this classroom example offer me?
- How might I adapt this example to my students' language and age level? My curriculum and my institutional setting? My teaching style and my culture?

During the course they creatively "shaped the way they teach English" as they experimented with ways they could adapt suggestions or techniques from the video to their own educational settings.

While "Shaping the Way We Teach English" is a rather challenging course, which sometimes needs adaptation for teachers with a lower level of English proficiency, in rural areas it may be substituted by the "Teaching Speaking" video series. This is one of the latest developments in ELT methodology provided by the British Council, which is supplied with a booklet and DVD video. The video materials are of high-quality which help EL teachers reflect on their teaching and learn from the practice of other teachers. Teacher trainers may well apply the above mentioned "participatory" approach to achieve active teacher involvement and thus better learning also.

Online professional development course

Another tool for professional development is online training courses. A pilot project was launched in 2006 by an initiative group who developed and tried out a 12-week distance course in practical English Teaching Methodology for village school teachers. A website with the forum and individual access for the experimental group was developed after the needs and technical opportunities of the target teacher group were analysed. The course was administered with the help of East Kazakhstan State Technical University. The following communication and interactive tools were used in the course:

- Online storage of materials easily accessible from anywhere in Kazakhstan;
- Forum for asynchronous discussions of methodology issues;

- Chat feature that enabled synchronous electronic consultations;
- E-mail feature for exchanging information between tutors and participants.

The topics for the course included "Project Work", "Creative writing with relevance", "Developing listening and speaking skills through picture games", "Role-play, storytelling and other free speaking activities", etc. Every topic used a different format and was based on an innovative technology: critical thinking, reflective teaching, project-based teaching, problem-based learning, and journal writing.

The course was based on the idea of learning through doing. The selected participants were to actively study the suggested material, apply received knowledge into their practice and report the results in due time. The project outcomes were evaluated by analysing feedback from both the participants and their supervisors.

The main problem with the course was a high dropout rate of participants. The analysis of the reasons showed most of the participants had not been ready for a new form of communication, different from common face-to-face interaction. They also could not cope with the tasks as they continued teaching at the same time. Some of them did not have permanent access to the internet. Therefore "Integrating Computer and Internet Technologies in ELT" course (2009) for selected participants from remote corners of a few Kazakhstan regions focused on training the use of various tools for teaching and learning with a view that it would be followed by cascade trainings in their districts.

Lesson plan competition

The American Cultural Center in cooperation with Alumni Board of East Kazakhstan American Corners Association and Renaissance ELT Association conducted a regional EFL teachers' competition entitled Best Lesson Plan about the USA. The project intended to encourage school teachers to create original lessons about the USA that would help further their professional development. Village school teachers were also encouraged to participate. With each year they gained more confidence in sharing their own experiences and growing ELT proficiency.

The competition had in view:

- broadening of knowledge about the USA, way of life, culture and democratic values of American people;
- strengthening cultural links between the peoples of Kazakhstan and the USA;
- sharing advanced pedagogical experience in the field of regional geography;

- encouragement of creative teachers and growth of prestige of a teacher's profession.

The course of competition was displayed on the website of Ust-Kamenogorsk American Culture Center.

The competition had a few stages:

- Stage 1 – consulting-methodical. The organisers explained to the participants the purposes and tasks of the competition. The participants attended seminars on regional geography teaching methodology and lectures in American Studies. The teachers could also get electronic consultation by e-mail.
- Stage 2 – the competition itself.
  The participants presented their lesson plans to the organising committee on CDs or by e-mail. The best works were placed on the website of the American Culture Center (http://www.pushkinlibrary.kz/ACC/lessons.htm#4). Then the lessons were videoed by a professional operator with the aim of making a 30-minute ELT training film.
- Stage 3 – Final seminar – presentation, teacher training video demonstration, ceremony of awarding the winners. The best lessons were published as a teacher training manual.

Conclusion

The above listed tools all have their own place in meeting the objective of English teachers' professional development. In order to select the most appropriate activity for a target teacher group in a certain context an organising body should consider needs analysis and resources available including not only material, but human as well.

Evaluation surveys carried out after completing seminars and courses examined the participants' opinions about course content, course materials, appropriateness and feasibility of course assignments, potential of materials for the use in their teaching process. The organisers also explored whether the participants' expectations had been realised. The analyses of the surveys proved the effectiveness and necessity of trainings.

Evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the seminars and courses through the surveys allowed local associations to identify areas in which the next seminar needed to improve. Further seminars and surveys allowed to directly address rural teacher areas of concern and interests. The associations therefore will continue working together building the capacity and skills of rural English teachers, as well as relationships with our regions communities.

An Analytical Study of English Language Teachers' Training in India

Vinay Kumar Singh

Abstract

The present study is an investigation of different aspects of English language teacher training in India. It is empirical in nature and the details of evidence are collected from English language teachers and master trainers at various levels with the help of a questionnaire. It is a dialogue that consists of logical questions and suggestions related to justification of teachers training in the process of English Language Teaching.

Purpose of the study

Today English language is not considered as a colonial legacy but is measured as a global phenomenon. In some states of India, such as Maharashtra, Karnataka, West Bengal, etc, English is introduced as a subject in the first standard, while some other states are planning to implement similar policies. English plays a significance role in educational curricula of India.

Despite many years of exposure to English, learners' performance in English is found highly inadequate. Who is responsible for this and what may be the reasons? The plausible answers to this question are expected to involve an array of diverse factors concerning teaching, learning, planning and practice of ELT. One key factor in this matter is the quality of teacher training. This paper is an attempt to investigate various aspects of English language teachers' training in India and its impact on the practice of ELT. It also aims to provide findings that can improve the quality and productivity of English language teacher training in India.

Methodology

Data collection tool

For the collection of data a questionnaire was used. It comprises two sections. The first section contains twelve close-ended questions assessing the academic and professional background of the respondents and their attitudes towards the implications of training. The second section contains

five open-ended questions which examine the relevance, justification and implications of English language teacher training in the teaching and learning process. It was expected that the responses to the questions would be directly associated with the respondents' personal experience, particularly about teaching and training of English. The objective of the study and convenience of the respondents have been taken into account in the formation of questions.

Hypothesis

The study was carried out in a planned direction and intended to test the following hypothesis:

i. Most of the teachers of English in India feel that training is not necessary.

ii. Teaching cannot be learnt through training.

Aims

The chief aims of the present study are as follows:

i. To study and explain teachers', researchers' and teacher trainers' views on English language teacher training in India.

ii. To investigate the different aspects of English language teachers training.

Subjects

English language teachers, teacher trainers and research scholars are the subject of this study. They were randomly selected from different academic institutions.

Analysis of data

The analysis shows that the respondents belong to different areas of English language teaching, training, and research. The sample consists of 24 respondents [Teacher Trainers (5), Teachers of English (15), and Research Scholars (4)]. The teachers are associated with different levels of teaching (both secondary and higher secondary - 6, graduate - 8, and both graduate & post graduate - 5). The views of respondents on statement 3 to 11(see appendix), are numerically represented in the tabulated form as follows:

Statements / Number of responders	Is training necessary for teacher? (3)	Did you undergo any training? (4)	Teaching is easier than learning. (5)	Untrained teacher cannot be successful. (6)	Training means prescription of methods. (7)	Training sensitizes to components of learning/ teaching environment. (8)	Training makes impact on teaching. (9)	Training shouldn't be compulsory for teacher. (10)	Teaching can be learnt through experience. (11)
Teacher Trainers									
Yes	5	5	3	1	3	5	5	2	5
No	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	3	0
Not Sure	0	-	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Teacher									
Yes	12	8	1	5	9	13	15	4	14
No	0	7	12	8	5	0	0	10	1
Not Sure	3	-	2	2	1	2	0	1	0
Research Scholars									
Yes	4	4	3	2	2	3	4	1	2
No	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	3	2
Not Sure	0	-	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Yes	21 (87.5%)	17 (71.54%)	7 (29.16%)	8 (33.33%)	14 (58.33%)	21 (87.5%)	24 (100%)	7 (29.16%)	21 (87.5%)
No	0	7 (21.16%)	14 (58.33%)	12 (50%)	9 (37.5%)	0	0	7 (66.66%)	21 (12.5%)
Not Sure	3 (12.5%)	-	3 (12.5%)	4 (16.66%)	1 (4.16%)	3 (12.5%)	0	1 (4.16%)	0

In response to statement no. 9, all the respondents have strong positive response.

Statement-12	Theoretical	Practical	Learner centered
What is the nature of teacher training in India?	20 (83.33%)	0	4 (16.66%)

Table 2 - Respondents view on nature of teacher training in India

It can be stated from the above table that teacher training in India lacks practicality. In all 20 respondents out of 24 consider it theoretical, while the rest of them consider it learner centered.

In the second section of open ended questions, respondents have the following views:

Problems faced in the delivery of content and with students

Following answers to question 13, respondents have come across with the different problems that can be categorised at three levels:

i. **Learner related**-Lack of interest and distrust shown by the students in subjects like English, use of and demand for explanation in Mother tongue (Hindi) in the classroom, lack of confidence, and heterogeneous cognitive levels of the learners.

ii. **Teacher related**-Dealing with the mixed groups of learners, selection of appropriate pedagogy, distributed attention on learners, dealing with rural learners, use of theoretical methods, monotonous classroom environment, inability to use English language (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc.) appropriately and failure to explain and relate theoretical concepts through practical examples.

iii. **System related-**Traditional syllabus, lack of authentic materials, unavailability of technology and language lab, and improper infrastructure of classroom.

All these problems are correlated and have an impact on the teaching-learning process.

Importance of training for teachers of English

In response to question 14, all respondents show a strong belief that training accelerates the personal and professional growth of a teacher, as discussed and explained below:

i. **Professional Growth**-Training helps teachers to find possible solutions to anticipated problems and challenges in the classroom, to utilize available resources reasonably and systematically, and apply new methods. It also provides some advance exposure to facilitate more effective teaching.

ii. **Personal Growth**-Training brings progressive changes in teaching and keeps trainees updated. It inculcates problem solving and leadership skills.

Without training, teaching is like a boat without radar which hardly reaches the destination.

Proposed form of English language teacher training in India

In response to question 15, while discussing the form of teacher training, all 24 respondents proposed different views:

- Training should be based on real classroom situation.
- Need to emphasize the practical aspect.
- Need to work out and incorporate indigenous methods that meet teachers' and students' needs.
- Teacher training should be based on Indian context.
- Theory should be internalized by practice.
- Primary emphasis should be on learning and then on teaching. Therefore, training should develop a clear understanding of how 'to learn' at first and how 'to teach' later on.
- Offer scope for trainees' professional and personal growth.

Drawbacks of language teacher training in India

In their explanation of drawbacks, respondents express the following views:

- The training of language teachers in India is more theoretical and less practical.
- It is prescriptive and dull in nature and limits the scope of innovation and motivation.
- It offers few opportunities to practice.
- It still follows the old format of training which has no alignment with recent trends.
- Ignorance of the training of various components of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing).
- Lacks assimilation of technology, such as the use of multimedia in language teaching.
- Scarcity of competent and motivated trainers.
- Unavailability of authentic and context-specific teaching materials.

Proposed ways to deal with such problems

The respondents also proposed some solutions to deal with the anticipated problems of English language teacher training in India, such as:

- Revision of the syllabi
- Incorporation of more practical sessions
- Use of technology in training
- Context sensitive and context specific training
- Meticulously planned course content
- Need of extensive empirical research to explore actual problems and their possible solutions.
- Development of indigenous methods
- Collective efforts

Findings and conclusion

The study leads to the following findings:

i.   The findings falsified the first hypothesis as already discussed. Out of 24 respondents, 21 respondents feel that training should be compulsory for language teachers. This view further strengthens statement 9 (section I) where all the respondents strongly support that training makes significant impact on the process of teaching. The second hypothesis is completely supported by the respondents. 21 respondents consider that teaching can be learnt through experience. Training to teacher is an objective activity that may facilitate and offer more scope for development in teaching.

ii.   A need for context-specific training and indigenous methods of teaching in order to attain the expected outcomes is expressed, because overseas methods may be inadequate and unsuitable in the Indian context.

iii. There is a need to encourage quality research in various areas of ELT in India because it may offer help to develop indigenous model(s) of teaching and practical understanding of English language education in India.

In this paper an attempt has been made to explore only some aspects of teacher training and to incorporate a limited range of views about how to improve it. This study is confined by the unavailability of time, small sample size and lack of resources. But there is a great scope for a more in-depth enquiry and discussion, which needs to be encouraged. We can say that there is an urgency to promote some quality research and reforms in the area of teacher training at all the levels to achieve the expected goals of ELT in India.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

Name: Designation:

Highest Qualification: Experience: Teaching ____ Training _____

Affiliation:

1.   I am a
Teacher Trainer ( )   Teacher of English ( )   Research scholar ( )

2.   My students belong to the standard of
Primary   (   )   Secondary   (   )   Higher Secondary   ( )
Graduate   (   )   Post Graduate   (   )

3.   Is training necessary for a language teacher?
Yes   ( )   No   ( )   Not sure   ( )

4.   Did you undergo any kind of formal training of teaching?
Yes   ( )   No   ( )

5.   Language teaching is easier than language learning.
Yes   ( )   No   ( )   Not sure   ( )

6.   Untrained language teacher cannot be a successful teacher.
Yes   ( )   No   ( )   Not sure   ( )

7.   Training means 'prescription of methods'.
Yes   ( )   No   ( )   Not sure   ( )

8.   Training is a process of sensitization to the components that contribute to the learning/teaching environment.
Yes   ( )   No   ( )   Not sure   ( )

9.   Training makes significant impact on the process of teaching.
Yes   ( )   No   ( )   Not sure   ( )

10. Training should not be compulsory for teacher.
Yes   ( )   No   ( )   Not sure   ( )

11. Teaching can be learnt through experience.
Yes   ( )   No   ( )   Not sure   ( )

12. What is the nature of teacher training in India?

Theoretical   (   )   Practical   (   )   Learner centered   (   )

13. What kind of problems do you face in delivery of content and with students?

14. For you, what is the importance of training for teacher of language?

15. What should be the form of English language teacher training in India?

16. What are the drawbacks of language teacher training in India?

17. How do you propose to deal with such problems?

Abbreviations used in this publication

CELTA   Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults

CPD   Continuous Professional Development

DELTA   Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults

DIET   District Institute of Education and Training

ETTE   English for Teaching and Teaching for English

KRP   Key Resource Person

NCTE   National Council for Teacher Education

PGCTE   Post Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of English

QSTT   Quality Student Talk Time

RIE   Regional Institute of Education

RIESI   Regional Institute of Education, South India

SSA   Education for All (Mission) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

STC   Senior Training Consultant

TTT   Teacher Talk Time

Biodata

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